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LETTERS

ON THE

SLAVE-TRADE, &c.

BRITISH MUSEUM

LETTERS

ON THE

SLAVE-TRADE,

AND THE

STATE OF THE NATIVES

IN THOSE PARTS OF

AFRICA,

WHICH ARE CONTIGUOUS TO

FORT ST. LOUIS AND GOREE,

WRITTEN AT PARIS

In DECEMBER 1789, *and* JANUARY 1790.

BY T. CLARKSON.

LONDON:

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TO

SAMUEL WHITBREAD, Esq.

THIS LITTLE TRACT,

RELATING TO A SUBJECT OF PHILANTHROPY

WHICH HAS LONG OCCUPIED HIS FEELINGS,

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS SINCERE

AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THOMAS CLARKSON.

PREFACE.

HAPPENING to be at Paris for a few months in the yea 1789, I became acquainted with ſeveral gentlemen, who expreſſed a wiſh to be informed of the merits of the queſtion of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade. I deſired ſuch of them, as appeared to me to have that ſubject moſt at heart, to propoſe to me certain queries in writing, which I would anſwer at my leiſure. Theſe queries were accordingly propoſed, and my anſwers were given as I had promiſed.

On my arrival in England, I accidentally ſhewed what I had thus written to a friend. He was ſo ſtruck with the anſwers to the firſt and ſecond of theſe queries, but particularly the ſecond, as to deſire me to publiſh them. "I have read," ſays he, "the Privy Council Report: I have read alſo the various publications on the ſame ſubject; and though I can collect very ſatisfactorily from theſe the different methods of making ſlaves on the continent of Africa, I have never

never been able, till the peruſal of theſe anſwers, to acquire any juſt idea of the ſtate of ſociety in which the natives live. I adviſe you therefore to publiſh them; firſt, as I have juſt hinted, becauſe you will be giving information on a branch of the ſubject that is but little known; and, ſecondly, becauſe I think you will prove the natives to have attained a ſtep in the ſcale of civilization, far beyond what any people imagine.

This advice on the part of my friend I declined attending to for ſome time; for I had hopes of ſeeing Mr. de Villeneuve in London, the gentleman, who furniſhed me with the matter for anſwering the queſtions alluded to; and I had no doubt but that he would have then given his own information in this country in a publick manner, and where it would have had its greateſt uſe. But when I found that Mr. de Villeneuve was in daily expectation of receiving orders to join his regiment abroad, and could not come to England, I conſented to the requiſition of my friend.

The following work then is compoſed of ſuch letters, as contain the anſwers to the firſt and ſecond of the queries propoſed to me, as I have already ſtated, during my reſidence at Paris. The reſt of the letters, written nearly at the ſame time, it would be quite ſuperfluous to publiſh, for as the contents of them have been given to the publick in England in other works, they muſt be now generally known.

It may perhaps appear ſtrange to the reader, that I ſhould have occaſion in the courſe of the work to deſcribe countries not very far diſtant from thoſe in the annexed map, and yet that theſe countries ſhould not be included in it. The Reader, however, will pleaſe to obſerve, that the annexed is a map only of Mr. de Villeneuve's travels, which

which he made himſelf, while reſident in Africa. The ſingle dotted lines repreſent the boundaries of diſtinct kingdoms: the double dotted lines deſcribe his own route. As this map contained all the countries, which form the principal ſubject of theſe letters, I thought there was but little occaſion to extend it ſo far as to take in others but ſlightly mentioned; and particularly, when there ſeemed to be no difficulty in making it appear plainly to the Reader where they lay.

THOMAS CLARKSON.

London, May 16, 1791.

BRITISH MUSEUM
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A Map of the TRAVELS of Mr. DE VILLENEUVE, from the River Sallum to the Senegal.

Scale of British Statute Miles 69½ to a Degree.
10 20 30 40

Senegal
Island of Bifeche
River Saguerey
°Gor
Senegal
OUALO
or Dominions of
Independent
BRAC
POULES
Fort St. Louis
River Senegal
°Gandiole
Bieurt
CAYOR
Empire
Capital of Cayor
or the Dominions of the
of
°Tockmat
°Little Boro
DAMEL
OUALOF
BAOL
Cape Verd
Dakard°
Rufisk°
I. of Goree
Cape Rouge
Country of the Serreres
°Gamboroo
Portudal
or the Dominions of
Country of the Serreres
I N
Point de Serenes
°Joal
Sangay°
River Silif
Kingdom of S I N
River Palmarin
Kingdom of SALLUM
River Sallum

17 16 15 Longitude West from Greenwich.

Pake Sculp.

LETTER I.

PARIS, DECEMBER 20. 1789.

SIR,

AS you have done me the honour to propoſe to me ſeveral queſtions for a reply on the ſubject of the African Slave-Trade, I ſhall begin with the two following: for they appear to me to have a natural claim to the firſt place, as objects of conſideration, in theſe letters:

I. What are the different methods of making ſlaves of ſuch perſons as come into the hands of the French, by means of their eſtabliſhments at Fort St. Louis and Goree.

II. What is the ſtate of ſociety, in which the natives bordering on theſe eſtabliſhments may be ſaid to live.

It has happened, Sir, very fortunately indeed for the gratification of your wiſhes, that I have already had, ſince my reſidence at Paris, ſeveral communications with one of the beſt informed men either in this, or

perhaps in any other country, upon theſe two points of the ſubject. I mean Monſ. Geoffroy de Villeneuve, who was aid-de-camp to the Chevalier de Boufflers, one of the members of your Aſſembly, during his reſidence as Governor of Goree.

M. de Villeneuve, who is a man of fortune and family here, accompanied the Chevalier to the coaſt of Africa, in the capacity now deſcribed. As a young man, who had made great progreſs in the ſtudy of natural hiſtory, and who had a great curioſity to learn the cuſtoms and manners of a people who were but little known, he was conſidered as peculiarly proper to accompany the Governor to theſe parts. He was accordingly often employed by the latter in embaſſies and expeditions of obſervation in the interior of Africa, into which he penetrated a conſiderable way. In the map annexed you will find his route by the doubly dotted lines. At one time, as you will ſee, he went by land from Dakárd, a village oppoſite to the iſland of Goree, to Fort St. Louis: at another from Dakárd through the interior of Cayor, from thence into the country of Oualof, and from thence through Baol into the Foreſts of the Serreres, penetrating through which he came again to the ſea-ſhore. At another time he travelled through the whole kingdom of Sin; and at another, into the kingdom of Sallum, though the latter route is not expreſſed like the former by dotted lines. Theſe, added to many petty excurſions not expreſſed in the map, from the bulk of his travels in theſe parts. It may not be unneceſſary here to mention that the annexed map is copied from one which he made himſelf on the ſpot, with this difference only, that whereas in the original you would ſee the names of almoſt innumerable villages, you ſee only the names of ſuch in the preſent as there is occaſion to mention for the illuſtration of your queſtions.

In

In theſe expeditions, as you have them now traced in the map, was Mr. de Villeneuve employed during his reſidence in Africa, which was in the whole about two years, ending in the beginning of the year 1789. As he was generally ſent upon them for the ſole purpoſe of obſervation, he did not fail to collect many facts, which it is probable that others, had they paſſed the ſame tract of country with other views, would have never known. He had alſo better opportunities than moſt other travellers in Africa of knowing the real ſituation of things there, inaſmuch as he was an eye-witneſs of what were in the interior parts, as well as of ſearching into the truth of many accounts of things given him by the natives which he did not ſee, inaſmuch as he underſtood their language, a grammar of which he made and retains by him at the preſent day. And as he kept a journal of all he heard and ſaw on the ſpot, he cannot be charged with having miſrepreſented any thing for want of memory, any more than he can be charged with having been biaſſed by party, when you conſider him to have been collecting his facts previouſly to any knowledge he could have of the agitation of the queſtion of the Slave-Trade.

It is by means of this gentleman then that I am now enabled to give you a minute, accurate, and faithful anſwer to two of the queſtions which you have done me the honour to propoſe to me for a reply. With his permiſſion I have already attended him many times upon this ſubject. What I have written down on one morning, though from his own mouth, I have ſubmitted to his inſpection on a ſecond, and ſometimes even on a third, ſo fearful have I been of miſtaking him in the leaſt point. Nor has he himſelf been leſs anxious to convey to me the truth; for if he has appeared on any occaſion to have had a doubt reſpecting the anſwer he was to give me, he has always conſulted his journal in my preſence, and of ſo much importance did he conſider it that men ſhould

be rightly informed upon this ſubject, and ſo neceſſary that every one of his ſtatements to me ſhould be confirmed if poſſible, that he gave me the other day directions to no leſs than four gentlemen now at Paris, ſome of whom had accompanied him in one or two of his expeditions, and others had reſided in Africa at the time, and he inſiſted that I ſhould ſee them and put to them the ſame queſtions as I had before put to himſelf. This requiſition I was obliged to comply with, by which means I had ſome valuable opportunities of ſeeing all Mr. de Villeneuve's obſervations to me confirmed. To this I muſt add, that having frequently mentioned the ſubſtance of Mr. de Villeneuve's information to Mr. Neckar, that gentleman has as repeatedly aſſured me that he has had preciſely the ſame information from General Boufflers himſelf on the ſame points.

Having now previouſly ſtated to you the authority upon which I propoſe to anſwer the firſt and ſecond of your queries, and that this anſwer will give you a knowledge of things as they were, ſo late as at the commencement of the year 1789, I have only to inform you that I ſhall begin to-morrow with your firſt queſtion, to which I ſhall keep cloſe in a ſeries of letters till I think I have anſwered it both to your ſatisfaction and my own.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient ſervant,

T. CLARKSON.

LETTER II.

Paris, December 21. 1789.

SIR,

I COME to-day to the conſideration of your firſt queſtion, which I beg leave to repeat here,

> What are the different methods of making ſlaves of ſuch perſons as come into the hands of the French by means of their eſtabliſhments at Fort St. Louis and Goree?

To give you the cleareſt anſwer to this queſtion, I ſhall refer you to the map. At the bottom of it you will find the country of Sallum. This country begins at the river Gambia, which is lower down than is expreſſed in the map, and extends upwards along the coaſt to the dotted line of boundary, which you ſee placed almoſt as high up as the river Palmarin. On paſſing this line of boundary, you get into the kingdom of Sin, which extends nearly along the ſame coaſt as high as Point de Serenes.

At

At Point de Serenes begins the preſent kingdom of Cayor under the dominion of Damél. This country extends from thence along the ſhore to beyond the mouth of the river Senegal. In the year 1785, that part of this tract of land, which lies between Point de Serenes and Rufiſk, belonged to Tin, or the king of Baol, and was called the country of the Serreres of Baol, in contradiſtinction to the Serreres of Cayor, both of whom were undoubtedly once one people, but Damél having afterwards routed Tin, he added this tract to his dominions of Cayor.*

From theſe three countries then, extending along the ſhore from the mouth of the Gambia to that of the Senegal, the French are furniſhed annually, on an average of a few years, with about five hundred ſlaves; namely with about two hundred annually from Sallum, one hundred from Sin, and one hundred from Cayor; the various methods of whoſe reduction to ſlavery being ſimilar in each, the following deſcription may be conſidered as applicable to them all.

The grand mode of obtaining ſlaves in theſe countries is the Great Pillage, which is executed by the military at the command of their reſpective kings. It is ſo ſyſtematically practiſed, and is a ſource ſo much more fertile than any other of ſupplying ſlaves, that from the conſtant experience of thoſe reſident on the coaſt of Africa, into

* It may be proper to make a diſtinction here, which appears not to be generally known. In ſeveral of the maps of theſe countries you find the words "Kingdom of Sallum, Kingdom of Sin," and in others the words "Kingdom of Burſallum or Barſallum, and Kingdom of Burſin, Barſin, or Barbaſin." Now the laſt of theſe two different kinds of expreſſions is wrong. The words Bour, Bur, Bar, and Bourba or Barba, are ſynonymous in theſe countries with the word King. Hence Sin and Sallum are the names of the countries themſelves, and Burſallum or Barſallum, and Burſin, Barſin or Barbaſin, the names of their reſpective kings, or the hereditary names of the kings of Sallum and Sin, and not of the countries which they ſeverally govern. In the ſame manner Damél is the hereditary name of the king of Cayor, though you ſometimes ſee abſurdly printed the "Kingdom of Damél," and Tin is the hereditary name of the king of Baol, though you find the equally ridiculous expreſſion of the "Kingdom of Tin."

whoſe hands the ſlaves have uſually fallen, the following has paſſed into a rule. About one hundred and twenty may be conſidered as pillaged out of the two hundred from Sallum, about forty out of the hundred from Sin, and about one hundred and twenty again out of the two hundred from Cayor; that is to ſay, out of the five hundred ſent from theſe countries in one year, two hundred and eighty may be conſidered as having been reduced to ſlavery by means of the Great Pillage.

The way of practiſing the Great Pillage is as follows: When any of theſe kings are in want of ſlaves, and intend to procure them in this manner, they aſſemble their military conſiſting of horſe and foot. Theſe are armed with ſabres, lances, bows and arrows, piſtols and guns. The number they aſſemble is proportionate to their own ſtrength, and the ſtrength of the village to be attacked. The hour of calling them together for this purpoſe is uncertain. It depends on the diſtance of the village whoſe inhabitants are deſtined for the prey. This village is ſometimes near. It is at other times far off, and perhaps at the diſtance of a journey of four days. The rule however upon ſuch occaſions is, to ſet out at ſuch a time, as to come upon it in the dead of night. The villages in theſe countries are open, and have no breaſt-work or defence.

As ſoon as the military arrive at the deſtined place, which is as before deſcribed in the dead of night, they ſurround it, but never attack it at that time. They wait always till the dawn of day. It is then that the women riſe, and employ themſelves in pounding millet for the purpoſe of reducing it to cuſcus*, to ſerve as bread. The ſound of the

* Millet powdered is called Cuſcus. This Cuſcus is of two ſorts, either for immediate or future uſe. When it is for immediate uſe, nothing more is done to it; when for future, it is mixed with the pulverized leaves of a certain tree, which have the quality of preſerving it for a length of time. This preſerved millet the negroes take with them on any journey or excurſion of a few days.

peſtle

peſtle is the ſignal for the attack. The military directly ruſh in and ſeize all they can. There are many reaſons why they make their attack at this hour : firſt, becauſe being dawn of day, they can ſee better : ſecondly, becauſe though the women are up, the men are in bed, and the doors of the huts are opened : and thirdly, becauſe the negroes in this part of the world, never like to perform any enterprize in the night.

It ſometimes happens that the kings accompany their troops in perſon. It is cuſtomary for them however, not to enter the village. They remain always on the outſide till the buſineſs is over.

As ſoon as the unfortunate inhabitants are captured, they are driven off. The men and women are made to walk. The children are put on horſeback. If the journey ſhould be two or three days long, as it ſometimes happens to be, they are driven or carried to one of the king's villages which lie in the way at night. There they are made to lie. The inhabitants are obliged to turn out for them, or to find them room. The captives are always guarded. In the morning they ſet off again. In this way they travel till they get to the king's reſidence, which they enter with the ſound of drums, horns and other inſtruments of their country-muſick, which the military take with them from home upon ſuch occaſions.

The Pillages, which I have been now attempting to deſcribe, are practiſed as circumſtances offer; either as the kings want money, or as they are tempted by the Europeans. For inſtance, in the year 1785, Damél owed money to one of the Mooriſh kings for ſome horſes, which the latter had ſold him. The debt had been then ſtanding for three years. The Mooriſh king, having frequently urged him for payment, preſſed him at laſt in ſuch a manner, that Damél was unable to delay it for a longer time. Thus ſituated, he reſolved on the Great Pillage. He aſſembled

accor-

accordingly about three thouſand foot and one thouſand horſe. With theſe he went to one of his villages, and returned with a booty conſiſting of thirty ſlaves. It muſt be remarked here that, though the Great Pillage is by far the moſt fertile ſource of ſupplying ſlaves, yet very few are obtained by means of it at one time. Sometimes two or three captives only are made in an attack: at other times none, for the villagers are often apprized of it beforehand, and eſcape. It ſometimes even happens, that the king is reſiſted and beaten, and obliged to go back with loſs. It is rather then to the frequency of the Great Pillage, than to the number taken by means of it at any one time, that the Slave-Trade is indebted for ſo conſiderable a branch of its ſupport.

As a ſecond inſtance, the king of Sallum was aſked by ſome merchants of Goree, who were there in 1786, to obtain them ſome ſlaves by means of the Great Pillage. He did not like the merchandize which they brought him, and refuſed therefore to comply with their requeſt. Thus ſituated they knew not what to do. One of them however, had the good fortune to recollect that he had ſome new louis d'ors in his pocket, which glittered a good deal, and were ſimilar to ſome which the king had admired, and bought at a former time. He immediately pulled theſe out of his pocket and preſented them, when they ſtruck the king's fancy ſo much, that he almoſt inſtantly ordered the Pillage.

As a third inſtance. In the month of November 1787, the uſual preſents were ſent by the French to Barbaſin at Joal, which is one of his reſidences, and which is ſituated, as you will perceive, on the ſea-ſhore. He happened to have no ſlaves in his poſſeſſion at this time. The Mulatto merchants however, who attended the embaſſy from Goree, were determined not to return home without ſome ſlaves. They intreated the king to have recourſe to the Great Pillage. But he refuſed them. They

importuned him again. They made him intoxicated at length by means of mixed liquors. In the moments of inebriety they attacked with redoubled force, and continued to weary him in this manner, till they obtained his orders for the Pillage, which was at length executed four or five times with various ſucceſs, in the courſe of the ſame week. Thus, Sir, do the Europeans, or their partners, or agents, ſeize every opportunity they can find of accompliſhing, at the expence of the eaſe and happineſs of peaceful and innocent villagers, their diabolical deſign.

It muſt not be omitted in this account of the Great Pillage, that the parties, who are ſent out to execute it, meet ſometimes with negroes in the way. Theſe negroes are travelling about with their merchandize, or are going out on their ordinary buſineſs, or returning home. All ſuch are immediately ſeized, and are made to accompany the expedition as ſlaves.

The Pillage, which I have been hitherto attempting to deſcribe, may be called with propriety (as I have already termed it) the Great Pillage: for Damél, as I have already had occaſion to obſerve, once ſent out about four thouſand of his military at a time; and the kings of Sin and Sallum have employed twelve hundred each on the ſame occaſions. That then may be ſtiled the Little, in contra-diſtinction to the former, where only five or ſix of the military are employed at a time. This happens when the king is in want of a ſingle man or woman-ſlave, and when he does not chuſe to alarm a whole village; for the Great Pillage is attended with bad effects, inaſmuch as there are many villages deſerted in the dominions of Sallum, Sin, and Cayor on that account, whoſe inhabitants have fled into the woods, or have gone farther into the country to reſide. Mr. de Villeneuve in his different

routes

routes, as already deſcribed to you in the map, has paſſed by ſeveral of them in this deſerted ſtate. In the Small Pillage then, the king employs only five or ſix of his guards. Theſe are ordered to conceal themſelves in the ſkirts of a village. They lie there till a man or woman comes out, when they ruſh from their hiding places, ſeize them and hurry them to the king.

If however none ſhould ſtir out, they go into the village itſelf. They have their proper military habits and accoutrements on. The circumſtance of being armed procures them reſpect. They paſs up and down as travellers, or as people whom curioſity had brought there. While in the village, they are obliged to behave with circumſpection. Were they to commit acts of violence there, they would be oppoſed. They are always however on the watch. If a woman, for inſtance, ſtirs out, they perceive it, ſlip out after her, ſurprize her, and take her off.

For this kind of expedition, there was one perſon reſident in Mr. de Villeneuve's time in the vicinity of Goree, who was particularly known. His name was Gannar, and he was the brother of the Marabou or the prieſt of Dakard. To this man Damél frequently applied to head theſe petty expeditions, and in conſequence of his artful and audacious conduct, acquired in the courſe of repeated practice, many an innocent traveller was way-laid, and many an innocent neighbour betrayed or aſſaulted, and ſent into the regions of ſlavery.

Another mode practiſed by the kings of Sallum, Sin, and Cayor to get ſlaves, when they do not intend to alarm a village, is treachery or fraud. To give one inſtance. The king of Sallum in the year 1787, ſent to a woman in a certain village at ſome diſtance from his own, to inform her that he wanted ſome millet, of which he underſtood ſhe had a ſmall

quantity to ſell. The woman, flattered with the proſpect of ſelling it to advantage, came immediately to the king, who directly occaſioned her to be ſeized and ſold. This is one inſtance of the acts of treachery made uſe of by the kings to ſupply the place of the Pillage, and to accompliſh their avaricious deſigns. Theſe acts vary as occaſion offers, or ingenuity contrives. Of this deſcription there may be five or ſix in every hundred of thoſe that are ſold for ſlaves in theſe parts in the courſe of a year.

The great bulk of the ſlaves then from theſe kingdoms are procured in the ways deſcribed. The other ways by which they are reduced to the ſame condition are theſe, either by private robbery, or by war, or by actual or ſuppoſed crimes.

The private robbers of the country, at leaſt in theſe parts of it, are but few. In the interior of them they can hardly exiſt at all. If a ſubject of Sallum, Sin, or Cayor, were to offer a negro for ſale in a village to which he did not belong himſelf, he would be ſuſpected by the Gueraff or principal officer of that village of having ſtolen him, and in all probability would be ſtopped and ſold. He could hardly ſell him except he were to meet with an European there. If again one of the Gueraff's own village were to attempt to ſell a ſlave to-day, whom he was known not to have had in his poſſeſſion the day before, he would be called upon to ſhew where he had gotten him, before the ſale were allowed. Theſe robbers then do not exiſt in the interior of theſe kingdoms. They exiſt generally near the ſhore, or on the banks of ſuch rivers as the craft of the Europeans or their agents frequent. In this caſe the diſpoſal of a kidnapped perſon is eaſy, for he is purchaſed without a queſtion being aſked. In theſe parts it is notorious at Goree that there are private ſtealers of men.

As

As to wars, in the common acceptation of the word war, very few ſlaves are ever furniſhed by means of them from theſe kingdoms. They happen very ſeldom. There was one of them however, in the year 1786. This was the war which Damél of Cayor made againſt Tin of Baol, as mentioned in the beginning of this letter. It originated in the ambition of the former. In the grand battle, which decided the fate of the dominions of the latter, twenty-five priſoners only were taken, and ſeven killed. The wars in ſhort in theſe countries are not deſtructive. Few people are either killed or taken. As to the duration of them, they laſt ſeldom longer than ten or fifteen days. When both parties are tired, they go away. There is no treaty of peace. Theſe wars, confining them to the common acceptation of the word, ariſe generally, as other wars, from jealouſy, avarice, or ambition.

The crimes, real or ſuppoſed, for which perſons are ſentenced to ſlavery in theſe countries, are adultery, murder, theft, and witchcraft. There is no crime in this part of the world for which they are puniſhed with death.

Adultery, as has been juſt ſtated, is a ſource of ſlavery. The common people have in general two or three wives; the great, or people of condition, as many as they can maintain, perhaps from ten to twenty: but in ſuch caſes not more than three are conſidered as legitimate; that is to ſay, the children of not more than three are conſidered in that light. If a man ſuſpects any of his wives to be guilty of adultery in a village where the king does not reſide, he calls his neighbours together. They judge the caſe. They then make their report to the Gueraff, and the Gueraff afterwards to the king. The Gueraff has no power but to report; he waits the determination of the king. If it happens, on the other hand, in any of the king's villages, that is, in any of them where he reſides,

ſides, he is the judge himſelf. If the woman accuſed be a perſon of condition, that is, if ſhe has influence in the country by having a number of ſlaves or many relations, and is condemned, ſhe is allowed to find a ſlave in her place. If poor ſhe is ſold herſelf. None but her huſband can be her accuſer. She is ſold, if condemned, for the king's profit. In theſe countries women only are accuſed. There are few ſlaves however from adultery.

Murder is diſtinguiſhed into two kinds, premeditated and accidental. If the murderer of the firſt kind be a man of condition, he muſt immediately on the perpetration of the act repair to the king. He muſt then throw himſelf at his feet with the value of a ſlave, and he will make his peace. If poor, he is ſure to be ſold, and ſometimes his family with him. The probability of his family being ſold at the ſame time depends on the poverty of the man, and the exigencies of the king; for it is for the benefit of the latter that he is ſold. If the murderer ſhould eſcape by flight, the king will not loſe his profit, and therefore in this caſe comes univerſally on his family, whom he ſells for ſlaves.

In accidental caſes there are two diſtinctions, both with reſpect to the rich and to the poor. If the man-ſlayer be a perſon of condition, he is not preciſely in the ſame predicament as before, for the king may abſolve him wholly from the payment of any fine. The poor man, not being able to offer the value of a ſlave, has the alternative left him of flying into another village, which he muſt immediately do on the commiſſion of the act. He muſt then go to the houſe of one of the principal men there, and, drawing a ſtake from his wall, throw himſelf at the owner's feet, and declare himſelf his voluntary ſlave. This is conſidered as a good ſituation for him, inaſmuch as voluntary ſlaves are treated like the children of the maſter, and are never ſold.

Theft

Theft is another ſource of ſupplying ſubjects for the Slave-Trade in theſe parts. The natives ſometimes ſteal cloth, millet, and other articles from one another; but in general oxen, which they drive off to ſell at another place. Any theft, ſmall or great, if brought home to the robber is puniſhed with ſlavery. When the robbers are taken and accuſed in a village where the king does not reſide, they are tried by the people, who are aſſembled for the purpoſe in what is called the publick place of the village. Having determined the caſe, they report their ſentence, as has been mentioned before, to the Gueraff, and the Gueraff afterwards to the king, who may reverſe it or not as he pleaſes. If it happens in the king's own village, he tries them himſelf. The accuſer muſt be the perſon from whom the things have been ſtolen. The proof neceſſary to convict the accuſed muſt be generally ſtrong. If he be caught in the fact; if the value of an ox be found upon him, and ſome circumſtances ſhould concur in ſhewing that he could have obtained the things ſo found upon him in no other way; if theſe or ſimilar proofs appear, he is condemned to ſlavery. The circumſtance of reimburſing the man for the loſs of his ſtolen property depends on its being ſmall. When the money is paid for the criminal, the king has univerſally about three parts of it to himſelf, and the Gueraff to the value of about ſix livres or two bars. If then the remaining part ſhould be equivalent to the property which has been ſtolen, an indemnification takes place. If not, the king will not give up his claim to three parts out of four of the criminal's value, and the man therefore muſt abide by the loſs.

The laſt ſource of ſlavery in theſe countries is witchcraft. If a perſon ſhould have a child or relation die, whoſe death has been rather ſudden, he may give out if he pleaſes, and he muſt be attended to if he does, that ſuch death has been occaſioned by ſome wizzard. In this caſe he is obliged to fix upon his man, and this is generally one whom he knows

knows to owe him a grudge, or whom he conſiders as a miſchievous man in the village. Having pointed out the ſuppoſed culprit, he accuſes him publickly with having practiſed the art of witchcraft on the deceaſed, and begins his accuſation always by pronouncing that "the "wizzard has eaten up his child's or relation's heart." Having lodged his accuſation in this manner, the man is tried. The mode of trying him is as follows. He is bound to a tree. A red hot iron is then applied to his tongue. If the iron burns it the man is pronounced guilty, if not, innocent. It is ſaid that there is an herb in the country, which if previouſly applied to the part to be burned, is an antidote for a moment againſt the effects of the fire; and it is believed that there is ſuch an herb, becauſe ſome, who have undergone the ordeal, have been known to eſcape unhurt. The puniſhment of ſlavery extends in this caſe to the culprit only and not to his children. The perſon, ſuppoſed to have been injured, has a ſmall ſhare out of the value of the ſlave, but the greater part as before goes into the hands of the king.

This then is, as I have ſaid before, the laſt ſource of ſlavery in theſe kingdoms, the natives of which, having been reduced to this ſtate by all the different methods now deſcribed, are ſold into the hands of the French by means of their eſtabliſhments on the iſlands of Fort St. Louis and Goree. All ſuch, as are made ſlaves by any of the means deſcribed in the kingdoms of Sin and Sallum, are ſent univerſally to Goree, as being the neareſt market, to be ſold there. Thoſe, on the other hand, who are reduced to ſlavery in Cayor, are ſent, ſome of them to Goree, and others to Fort St. Louis, for ſale; for if you conſult the map, you will find that Damél's territories border upon both. Not more than fifty, however, out of the two hundred are ſent to Fort St. Louis; for at Fort St. Louis the Senegal company have an excluſive privilege of buying ſlaves, whereas at Goree any perſon may buy them who pleaſes.

Now,

Now, where all can buy, there will be undoubtedly a competition, and where there is a competition for any commodity, it will fetch the greater price. Hence only ſuch of Damél's ſlaves, to the number mentioned, are ſent to Fort St. Louis for ſale, as are made in thoſe parts of his dominions which are cloſe upon that iſland.

I have now concluded my account of the different methods of reducing people to ſlavery in the dominions of Sallum, Sin, and Cayor. On a recapitulation it will be found that about two hundred and eighty, ſent annually from theſe countries, are ſuch as have been taken by the Pillage, and that about five in every hundred may be ſet down annually as ſlaves in conſequence of the ſtratagems of their reſpective kings. Hence it is manifeſt that three hundred and five out of five hundred, or more than three out of five from theſe kingdoms may be called the victims of violence and fraud, while not only others of them are entituled to the ſame name, but the majority of the reſt may be ſaid to owe the loſs of their liberty to a ſyſtem of laws not only partial and wicked in itſelf, but rendered ſtill more intolerable by being interpreted and enforced by a deſpot, juſt as his paſſions call for new or additional gratifications, and as his ſubjects are more or leſs able to reſiſt the determination of his will.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient ſervant,

T. CLARKSON.

LETTER III.

Paris, December, 23, 1789.

SIR,

IN my laſt letter I gave you an ample deſcription of the different methods by which the natives, to the amount of about five hundred annually, were reduced to ſlavery in the dominions of Sallum, Sin, and Cayor; that is to ſay, from the mouth of the river Gambia along the coaſt to the Iſland of Fort St. Louis at the mouth of the river Senegal. At the mouth then of this latter river, I ſhall reſume my account, and tracing the ſtream as far as Cor, which you will find in the map to be ſituated a little above its confluence with the river Sagueray, I ſhall continue it to that village, noticing whatever may relate to your firſt queſtion within theſe limits.

The extent of territory then, which will be the ſubject of my preſent letter, comprehends two diſtricts, namely, the kingdom of Oualo, and the Iſle of Biffeche. Theſe countries I ſhall deſcribe by the map,

map, before I give an account either of the number of perſons annually furniſhed from them, or of the manner in which they become ſlaves.

The country of Oualo, beginning above Fort St. Louis, is bounded on the Weſt by the river Senegal, on the North by the river Sagueray, on the Eaſt by the country of the independent Poules, and on the South by Cayor. The Moors made incurſions into this country about five years ago, and killed the king. Deeming themſelves from this moment the lords and diſpoſers of the ſoil, they took the liberty of appointing to the throne. The perſon proclaimed by them was a Negro, a weak man, but a relation of the former king. This perſon, or Brac, (for Brac is the hereditary name of the king of Oualo, in the ſame manner as Damél of the king of Cayor), reigns at the preſent day, but he is tributary to the Moors, who, conſidering him as a creature of their own, rob and plunder in his territories as often as they think proper.

The Iſland of Biffeche is formed by two rivers, by the Senegal on the one ſide, and the Sagueray on the other. This iſland is in the poſſeſſion of a certain Seignior or Lord, who is called Bequio. This Seignior holds it of Brac, and gives him a certain number of oxen annually, beſides certain articles of merchandize, for the tenure.

From theſe two countries then, as now deſcribed, come about two hundred and forty ſlaves in the courſe of the year; namely, about one hundred annually from Oualo (forty of whom are furniſhed by Brac, and ſixty by the Moors) and about one hundred and forty from Biffeche, the different methods of whoſe reduction to ſlavery are as follow:

To begin firſt with Oualo. Of the forty who are furniſhed annually from this country by Brac, about thirty are reputed criminals, and are made in the different ways, as in Sallum, Sin, and Cayor. The reſt are taken by the king in a kind of pillage, as he has an opportunity of getting poſſeſſion of their perſons by treachery and force. The reaſons why Brac does not pillage to a proportionable extent with the kings mentioned in the former letter, is that he has but little power to do it, and that his maſters, the Moors, would not ſuffer him, if they knew it, to anticipate their prey. Theſe forty perſons then, furniſhed by Brac from Oualo, are ſent directly to the French eſtabliſhment at Fort St. Louis, to be ſold. They are marched by land, ſometimes two, ſometimes three or four, but ſeldom more of them at a time, and are conducted by the military of the king.

The other ſixty, who are furniſhed from Oualo, are ſupplied by the Moors, and this generally but in one way. The Moors inhabit the Northern bank of the Senegal. They have no houſes or fixed habitations, but live in tents, which they ſtrike as often as they chooſe to remove to another place. Theſe people live almoſt entirely by plunder; and if a few Negroes be excepted, whom they purchaſe when they go trading over land into Sin and Cayor and whom they pay for in horſes, all that come out of their hands may be ſet down ast he produce of treachery and force.

Theſe people go out in bodies of five or ſix. They croſs the Senegal at Cor, and other places, when they purpoſe to ſteal the inhabitants from Oualo. This river they croſs by ſwimming, both themſelves and their horſes. That their arms and ammunition may be kept dry, they make a ſmall bed of ſtraw, in which they place their muſkets, piſtols, and daggers, and puſh it before, or drag it after them acroſs the ſtream.

ſtream. When over, they mount their horſes, and, galloping acroſs a ſmall part of the country of the independent Poules, they arrive in the kingdom of Oualo. They then advance into the country for two or three leagues, ſometimes more, and ſometimes leſs, according to the plan of their expeditions.

If theſe Barbarians meet with any Negroes in their way, they ſeize them; if not, the following is the mode purſued. They conceal themſelves and their horſes in the woods near the different villages where they ſeek their prey. If ſolitary men, or if women and children ſhould come out, they ruſh from their hiding places, ſeize them, and gallop off. If, on the other hand, five or ſix men ſhould come out mixed with women and children, they diſcharge all their muſkets at once, kill the men, and gallop off with the reſt. In the caſe of women and children, who are made captives, they tie theſe behind them on horſeback. The body of the woman or child touches the back of the Moor, to which it is faſtened by one of their country cords. The Moor, while galloping, has always one of the hands of the woman or child in his own, the fingers of which he bites, either by way of puniſhment, or with a view of ſilencing them, ſhould they attempt to create an alarm by noiſe. The men are often tied by the hands to the tails of the horſes, and pulled along, the riders on the one hand whipping the horſes on, and other Moors following the Negroes with a whip behind, on the other. At other times they are bound to the back of a camel, which theſe robbers take with them, when their incurſions do not extend far from the river. Carrying off their booty in this manner, they repair as quickly as poſſible to the Mooriſh tents.

This is the way uſually adopted by the Moors, when they go out in parties of five or ſix. It happens ſometimes, however, that they croſs the

the Senegal in larger bodies, in which caſe they do not conceal themſelves as before. They contrive only to ſurprize a village in the night, when they attack it at once, and carry off all the inhabitants they can ſeize.

In theſe ways then, conſiſting of robbery by ſmaller or larger bodies, are furniſhed the ſixty from Oualo as before deſcribed. By the ſame mode as theſe are furniſhed, the remaining one hundred and forty, to whom the account extends in the preſent letter, are ſupplied from the iſland of Biffeche, ſo that one deſcription will do for the whole. The Moors make the ſame incurſions into this iſland, and for the ſame purpoſe as into Oualo. The marks of their devaſtation there are but too evident. It was ſaid that in conſequence of the Pillages of Barſallum, Barbaſin, and Damél, ſeveral villages were deſerted in Sallum, Sin, and Cayor, whoſe inhabitants had either fled higher up into the interior country, or had retired into the woods. Much more is it the caſe in theſe two countries, which are the ſubject of this letter. In the iſland of Biffeche a number of deſerted villages are to be ſeen, and there are not fewer in Oualo. Almoſt every creek has been ranſacked, and moſt of the villages diſturbed in their turn, to get poſſeſſion of the bodies of men. The miſerable inhabitants know not what to do nor where to fly. The lord of Biffeche and the king of Oualo are unable to protect them; for the firſt is tributary to the ſecond, and the ſecond to the Moors. In the time of ſeed and of harveſt, they are often obliged to remain in their villages to be near their lands for the purpoſe of cultivation, and to ſecure a crop. At this time, therefore, they muſt defend themſelves as well as they can. When the ſeaſon, however, is over, it is cuſtomary for them to join (the inhabitants of two or three villages together) againſt the incurſions of the Moors. On the return of ſeed time and harveſt they ſeparate again, and return to their reſpective

tive lands. They live however continually, whether united or ſeparate, in a ſtate of anxiety and alarm. It is impoſſible adequately to deſcribe the ideas which theſe miſerable people have of the character of the Moors. The name, by which the Moors have been always known to them, is Nars, in the ſame manner as they have been known by the appellation of Moors to us. Such a man belongs to the Nar nation. Now this word is not only now expreſſive of the national name of theſe barbarians, but has become a word in the language of the Negroes, in conſequence of the infamous conduct of the former, to convey to the hearer the united characters of a liar and of a thief. It is now conſtantly uſed in familiar intercourſe in theſe two ſenſes, and as frequently as Sakend, the original negro word to expreſs them both; ſuch ideas have theſe poor people of the rapacious conduct and treachery of the Moors.*

But to return. The poor Negroes, who to the number of two hundred, if we reckon them altogether, are thus plundered annually by the Moors from Oualo and Biſſeche, are conveyed immediately after their capture, in the manner before deſcribed, to the Mooriſh tents. From theſe tents, which are on the northern ſide of the Senegal, they are made to travel to the iſland of Fort St. Louis, upon its Northern bank. The two hundred deſcribed are never marched down at a time. They are generally ſent in bodies of five or ſix according to the num-

* Mr. de Villeneuve informs me, that the Moors are ſo habituated to robbery, that ſcarcely any perſon of any complexion can eſcape without loſing ſomething if long among them. They are even expert at thieving with their feet, which are always bare; for if any thing ſhould have fallen upon the ground that is worth having, a Moor will look the owner of it in the face, and at the ſame moment contrive to take it up with his toes, and convey it with wonderful dexterity by means of the ſame to his companions, who are behind him. Their whole life, in ſhort, is a ſcene of robbery, and the Negroes have well applied their national name to denote the characters deſcribed.

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ber captured in any of the expeditions made. To every five or ſix are nine or ten Moors. The reaſon of ſo large a number of the latter is, not becauſe nine or ten are neceſſary to guard five or ſix miſerable vanquiſhed beings, ſome of whom are frequently in a wounded ſtate, but becauſe the Moors are even ſo diſtruſtful of one another as well as of the Europeans, that they will all be witneſſes of the bargain made. If the place, from whence they begin their route with their captives be at no great diſtance from Fort St. Louis, and other circumſtances ſhould intervene, they drive the latter before them, and march on foot; if at four or five day's journey, they have moſtly their camels with them. They put the women and children upon theſe, and frequently ride themſelves. In this way they travel. At night they contrive to get to ſuch of the tents of their countrymen as they know to be ſcattered in the way, where they ſleep in ſecurity with their plunder. In the morning they ſet off again. When they arrive at Fort St. Louis, they offer their priſoners for ſale, but are ſo avaricious, and ſo ſuſpicious of being defrauded, that, including the time of making their bargains, and of examining the goods to be given them in exchange, it is ſometimes four days before a ſingle Negro can be ſold. Having diſpoſed of their booty they return home, and prepare for freſh ravages.

To ſum up the whole. About two hundred and forty perſons, as I have before ſtated, may be ſaid to be annually reduced to ſlavery in the kingdom of Oualo and the Iſland of Biffeche, as deſcribed in the preſent letter, forty of whom have been ſaid to be furniſhed by Brac, and the reſt by the Moors. Of thoſe furniſhed by Brac, about thirty were ſaid to have been enſlaved in conſequence of crimes, and ten in conſequence of the Pillage. Of thoſe again brought in by the Moors, all except a few (as has been mentioned before) whom they buy when they trade

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over land into Sin and Cayor, are ſtolen from their reſpective homes. Suppoſe then that twenty ſhould be bought on theſe occaſions in the courſe of the year. Of theſe, twelve will have been pillaged in their own country, according to the proportion given in the former letter. The balance then for Oualo and Biffeche will ſtand thus. About forty in round numbers may be conſidered as furniſhed in conſequence of crimes, while two hundred are actually the produce of treachery and force.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient ſervant,

T. CLARKSON.

LETTER IV.

SIR, *Paris, December 24, 1789.*

HAVING in my laſt letter explained to you the different methods of making ſlaves in thoſe countries which are bounded by Cayor on the one hand and the Senegal on the other, following it from its mouth to the village of Cor, I ſhall now take an adjoining portion of country for the ſubject of this letter, namely, ſuch a portion of it as adheres to the ſouthern ſide of the Senegal from Cor to Podor, and which contains the territories of the Independent Poules.

The people, the extent of whoſe territories I am now going to deſcribe, are named in ſome maps as I have juſt mentioned them, but in others are termed Phulis, Fulis, or Foules. They are called Independent, becauſe there is no one perſon who can call himſelf their king. They are broken into diſtinct and petty governments. To each tribe there is a petty Seignior or Chieftain, with limited power; and there are many ſuch governments and tribes. Their country,

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as I ſaid before, is bounded on the north by a portion of the Senegal, which reaches from Cor to Podor. The latter place, which is a conſiderable one for trade, is not laid down in the map, but is to be ſuppoſed at ſuch a diſtance up the river, as, if the windings of it were taken in, it would be ſixty leagues from the Iſland of Fort St. Louis. On the weſt it is bounded by Oualo, on the ſouth by the empire of Oualoff, which is ſometimes expreſſed in maps under the titles of Jalloff and Walloff, and on the eaſt by the Dependent Poules. This latter country likewiſe is not expreſſed in the annexed map, but if a line were drawn at right angles to the Senegal at Podor, this line would ſhew where it begins, and repreſent the boundary intended to be deſcribed.

From the country then, contained within theſe limits, about five hundred ſlaves may be conſidered annually to come. Of theſe the Moors furniſh three hundred to the Senegal company, and the Poules the reſt.

The only way in which the Moors get poſſeſſion of the perſons of ſuch of the Independent Poules, as they ſell to the French, is by rapine. They do not heſitate to ravage the country of the latter as occaſion offers. In the ſame manner as they have been deſcribed to rob in Biffeche and Oualo, croſſing the river on horſeback, they extend their ravages along the ſouthern banks of the Senegal from Cor to Podor, and attack the natives; and to ſuch a pitch of audacity have theſe ruffians arrived, as, when no objects of plunder have offered there, to have galloped on for the ſame purpoſes into the very territories of Oualof.

The remaining two hundred of the independent Poules, who are ſold to the French Senegal company, are procured in the ſame manner,

with this difference only, that depredations are made on their perſons by their own countrymen, whereas in the former caſe they were made upon them by the Moors. The different tribes of the independent Poules are in a ſtate of continual warfare with one another. There are no regular battles between them. There are ſkirmiſhes only, for the whole is a ſcene of robbery, and theſe ſkirmiſhes happen without any provocation on either ſide. In ſhort, they ſeize and plunder where they can. Not content with what they have gained in the courſe of theſe internal depredations, they ſometimes imitate the example of the Moors, and make incurſions into Oualoff, where they ſeize ſuch of the inhabitants as they find defenceleſs, and carry them off for ſale. The two hundred then, who are furniſhed annually by the Poules, are principally Poules themſelves, and the reſt (a very few) are from Oualoff.* All theſe, originally free people, may be conſidered as the effects of plunder, and this plunder to owe its origin to the Slave-Trade.

The way, in which the whole of the five hundred now mentioned to have been captured and ſent annually from this quarter, are conducted to Fort St. Louis, is the ſame. It differs, however, from that, in which all the others ſpoken of in the former letters are conveyed to the place of ſale; for whereas it was cuſtomary for theſe to be conveyed by land, it is uſual for thoſe now under conſideration to be ſent by water. Their conveyance to the Senegal company is by means of the Podor fleet. This fleet conſiſts of ſmall veſſels with decks, the ſmalleſt of which is of ten and the largeſt of ſixty tons. They are navigated by Negroes of the country. About five or ſix of theſe are uſually employed in the veſſels of the firſt mentioned tonnage, and from five

* There are no convicts to ſlavery in the country of the independent Poules.

or ſix to forty in the reſt of them as far as thoſe of the laſt. This fleet conſiſting of ſuch veſſels, and thus manned, is called the Podor fleet; and it is ſo called, becauſe it is conſtantly employed for a ſeaſon in going from Fort St. Louis to Podor, to fetch millet, ivory, gum, and ſuch other articles the produce of the country as are there for ſale. Having ſhipped theſe, they in their way back take in ſuch of the Negro ſlaves as the independent Poules have to dipoſe of on the one ſide of the river, and the Moors on the other. When they have landed their cargoes at Fort St. Louis, they go up again to Podor, and return as before, taking in the Negroes, more or leſs in number, as they are caught. The voyage up and down is generally about fifteen days, and the ſeaſon is from January to July.

It is hardly neceſſary to remind you here, that all the ſlaves, who are the ſubjects of this letter, are the produce of treachery and force.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient ſervant,

T. CLARKSON.

LETTER

LETTER V.

PARIS, DECEMBER 26. 1789.

SIR,

THE letters, which I have hitherto had the honour of writing to you, comprehend an account of no leſs than twelve hundred and forty perſons, who are annually made ſlaves from the mouth of the Gambia along the coaſt to that of the Senegal, and from thence along the windings of the latter river to Podor. There is yet one other place, and but one more, from which the French Senegal company have been accuſtomed to obtain their ſlaves.

At Podor, mentioned in my laſt letter as a place of conſiderable trade, begins the country of the Dependent Poules, and continues along the Southern banks of the river. It is called Dependent, becauſe all the people contained in it, contrary to the uſage of the Independent ones, are ſubject to one king. Their late king, or Seratic (for that was the hereditary name of the king of the dependent Poules) died in the year 1785, when a perſon of the name of Almammy, who had been his Marabou or prieſt, having ſeen by long experience the injuſtice as well as impolicy of continuing things as they were in the late reign, uſurped the throne. In this act he was ſupported by his fellow citi-

zens;

zens; and he retains his ſituation with the name of his family, having diſcarded the title of Seratic, to the preſent day.

This prince began his reign by oppoſing the ravages of the Moors, who in the time of his timid predeceſſor, were often ſuffered with impunity to make incurſions into the country for the purpoſe of getting ſlaves. His oppoſition was ſo highly reſented by theſe barbarians, that they inſtantly aſſembled their tribes, and ſwarmed into his territories with a view of dethroning him, and of taking away his life; but Almammy, apprized of their coming, collected the force of the country, and, putting himſelf at the head of it, not only ſlew the king of the Moors with his own hand, but defeating his army with great ſlaughter, obliged them to fly with precipitation acroſs the Senegal to their former tents.

His next ſtep was to prohibit the ſale of the perſons of men, and to aboliſh perſonal ſlavery in his own dominions, giving encouragement to agriculture and manufactures in their place.

Not ſatisfied with theſe proceedings, he made a decree as a diſcouragement to the Slave Trade in the beginning of the year 1787, that whereas ſlaves made in other diſtant countries had been accuſtomed to be paſſed, in their way to Fort St. Louis, through his dominions, no ſuch paſſage ſhould be allowed them in future, and accordingly, at the proper ſeaſon of the year, he put his decree into execution by ſtopping the paſſage of the ſlaves who were coming in the Galam fleet from Bambarra.

The French Senegal company, alarmed at the enforcement of this edict (for the negro veſſels were then waiting in the Road for the return

turn of the Galam fleet) ſent a remonſtrance to the king, and demanded that the Bambarra ſlaves ſhould be permitted to paſs. This remonſtrance, however, was ineffectual. They tried him next by many and rich preſents. But he ſent all of them back, adding, that he would not only hinder the route of the ſlaves for that year, but as long as he ſhould live; and that if the whites ſhould attempt any depredations on his ſubjects in conſequence of his determination, he would retaliate. His conduct was ſo ſpirited and ſerious at the ſame time, that three reſpectable gentlemen ſent by the Court of Sweden to make diſcoveries in the interior parts of Africa, and who were then waiting at Fort St. Louis for the purpoſe, but could not follow their intended route without paſſing through the dominions of Almammy, were hindered from executing their deſign. Theſe gentlemen returned ſoon afterwards to Europe, in conſequence of the then ſituation of things in that quarter, two of whom, Dr. Spaarman and Mr. Wadſtrom, (with whom Mr. de Villeneuve was intimately acquainted both at Fort St. Louis and Goree) coming to England in their way home, were examined by the Committee of Privy Council, which, as I have often informed you in the courſe of converſation, were appointed to inveſtigate the ſubject of the Slave Trade laſt year.

Such then was the determination of king Almammy, and ſuch it continued to be, ſo that the Senegal Company had no other proſpect of filling the veſſels then lying in the Road for the reception of the Bambarra ſlaves, than by application to the Moors. Theſe Barbarians, on receiving new bribes and a new aſſortment of arms and ammunition, made extraordinary ravages into Oualo and Biffeche, by means of which an extraordinary number of the miſerable natives were torn from their reſpective habitations in that year.

But,

But, to return from this digreſſion. In the dominions of Almammy, which I have deſcribed to begin at Podor, and to continue along the ſouthern banks of the Senegal, there are no ſlaves; and the chain of the trade not only continues broken along the banks of the Senegal in theſe domains, but till you come to Galam, which is about two hundred and fifty leagues from the iſland of Fort St. Louis; ſo that you have to conceive the river to run much farther than it is laid down in the map, before you come to another place from whence the French have been uſually furniſhed with any ſlaves.

When, however, you come to this place, which has two names, Galam and * Fort St. Joſeph, you come rather to a place, where ſlaves have been accuſtomed to be ſhipped than to be procured; ſo that to account for thoſe to whom I allude in the beginning of my letter, it will be ſtill neceſſary to advance, that is, to leave Galam and the river Senegal, and, turning to the right hand, or ſouth of them, to go overland about two months journey to Bambarra. From this region it was, that the French were furniſhed annually with about a thouſand ſlaves, till their paſſage was ſtopped by Almammy as before deſcribed, and with which they continue to be furniſhed, if they have diſcovered for them another route.

Conformably with the plan, purſued in my former letters, I ſhould here give a deſcription of Bambarra, but as Mr. de Villeneuve informs me that he has collected no information about it, I am obliged to relinquiſh my deſign.

* The French had a fort about fifty years ago at Galam, which they called Fort St. Joſeph, and hence the name.

My next taſk would be to give an account of the methods of making ſuch of the ſlaves, as have been uſually brought from that quarter;—but here again I am obliged to be ſilent. How the ſlaves are obtained, as far as Podor, is accurately known: for the daily traffick from Fort St. Louis to Podor for one ſeaſon of the year, namely, as before ſaid from January to July, as well as afterwards from Fort St. Louis to Galam for the remaining, to which I now allude (which again occaſions a traverſe of the former parts) gives great opportunities of tracing the matter with preciſion there. In what manner, however, the Bambarra ſlaves, or the few who may have joined them from the neighbourhood of Galam have been uſually procured, is not ſufficiently known for me to ſay. It was impoſſible for Mr. de Villeneuve or his fellow-travellers to learn the hiſtory of perhaps a thouſand perſons coming in at a time, even if he had had an inclination to have done it, ſo eaſily as of two or three when brought in from Cayor, or by the Moors. The length of the way, and the paſſing through a variety of hands, rendered the inquiry more difficult, than when a ſlave came directly from a known and leſs diſtant ſpot, and was never in any other hands than of the perſons who brought him in. Add to this, that the language of the Bambarra ſlaves was not underſtood, whereas that of thoſe from Cayor, Biffeche, and Oualo was known by many at Fort St. Louis, ſo that even from their own mouths nothing of their hiſtory could be gained. For theſe and other reaſons I am obliged to be ſilent as to the modes in which perſons have been uſually reduced to ſlavery in this quarter.

With reſpect to the mode of bringing down the ſlaves from Bambarra to Fort St. Louis, as it was previouſly to the year 1787 (which will be the next topick according to the plan hitherto purſued) there is more light to conduct us on the way. The route between

theſe places conſiſts but of two expeditions, namely, from Bambarra to Galam, and from thence to Fort St. Louis; and theſe have been long eſtabliſhed and are well known. There are but two deſcriptions of people to be conſulted on this occaſion; namely, the two parties who conduct the ſlaves upon their way; and as theſe meet with each other perſonally at Galam, there is no difficulty in coming at a knowledge of the truth. The following is the account communicated to me by Mr. de Villeneuve, and which he believes to be the true.

The firſt route of the ſlaves, previouſly to 1787, was from Bambarra to Galam; the former of which is not the name of a town, but of an extenſive country. The perſons, who conducted them from the former to the latter place, were always one deſcription of Negroes, namely, the Mundingoes. Theſe Mundingoes were ſcattered over Africa nearly in the ſame manner as the Jews over Europe and other parts of the world; and they were in fact the principal ſlave merchants of the country, following that line of life as a diſtinct occupation or trade. Thoſe of the Mundingoes, to whom I allude at preſent, were ſuppoſed to reſide high in the interiour country, and not far from the river Gambia. From their habitations in theſe parts they travelled annually to Bambarra, ſetting out at ſuch a ſeaſon of the year as they calculated would give them ſufficient time to reach that region, to make their bargains for ſlaves there, and to arrive with their reſpective purchaſes in the month of October at Galam.

Having collected their ſlaves in this country, they began the firſt of the routes deſcribed. There were uſually eight or ten parties of theſe Mundingoes, conſiſting of from twelve to twenty each, and

each party marched down one hundred, or one hundred and fifty ſlaves at a time. The different ways, in which they marched them down to prevent any effectual oppoſition or inſurrection on the one hand, and eſcape on the other, were ſaid to be the three following:

In the plate No. 2, and Fig. 1, A A repreſents two ſeparate pieces of wood, which in the Fig. 2, 3. are made faſt to the necks of two Negroes by means of cords, which are compoſed of the roots of trees, and are in uſe in thoſe countries. Many of the Negroes were accuſtomed to be driven before the Mundingoes, one by one, each with this inſtrument on his neck. It was found convenient for two reaſons: Firſt, Becauſe the roads, which lay through the woods in theſe parts, were often ſo narrow, as not to admit three or four perſons to walk abreaſt; Secondly, Becauſe it was an inſuperable obſtacle to an eſcape, for the trees were ſo cloſe to each other in the foreſts, as not to ſuffer any perſon to go between them, who had ſuch an incumbrance on his neck.

The ſecond manner of conducting them is deſcribed in the ſame plate. Fig. 4 repreſents an inſtrument, which is of wood. Within the crutches of this inſtrument, which are at each end of it, are placed the necks of two Negroes in Fig. 5, which are confined in it at the extremities X X by means of certain cords, which are in uſe in that part of the world. Thus confined, two at a time, others of the Negroes, who were annually brought from Bambarra to Galam are ſaid to have travelled.

The third way is deſcribed in the plate No. 3. In Fig. 1, B repreſents a large log of wood, X a crutch at one end of it, and A a twiſted cord to which it is faſtened at the other. This log is made faſt

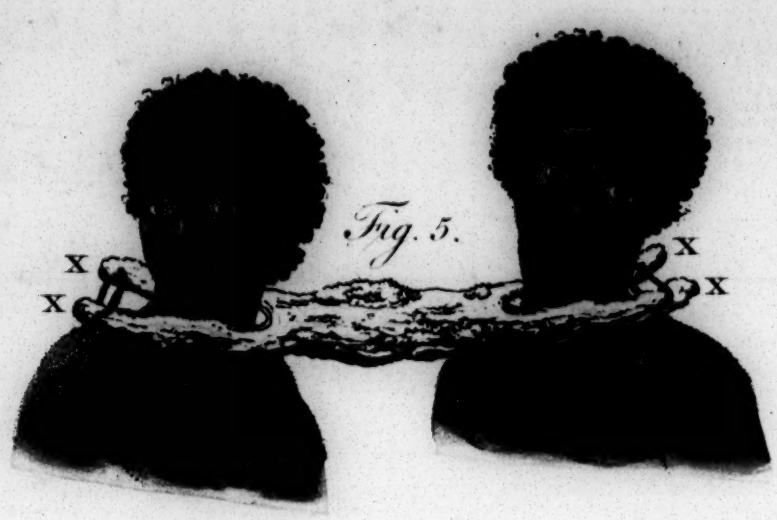

Fig. 5.

Fig. 4.

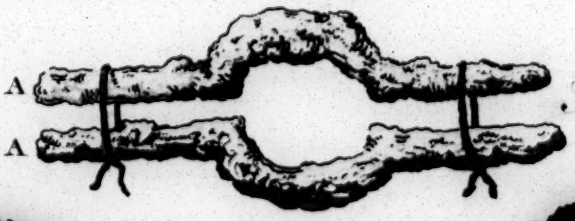

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

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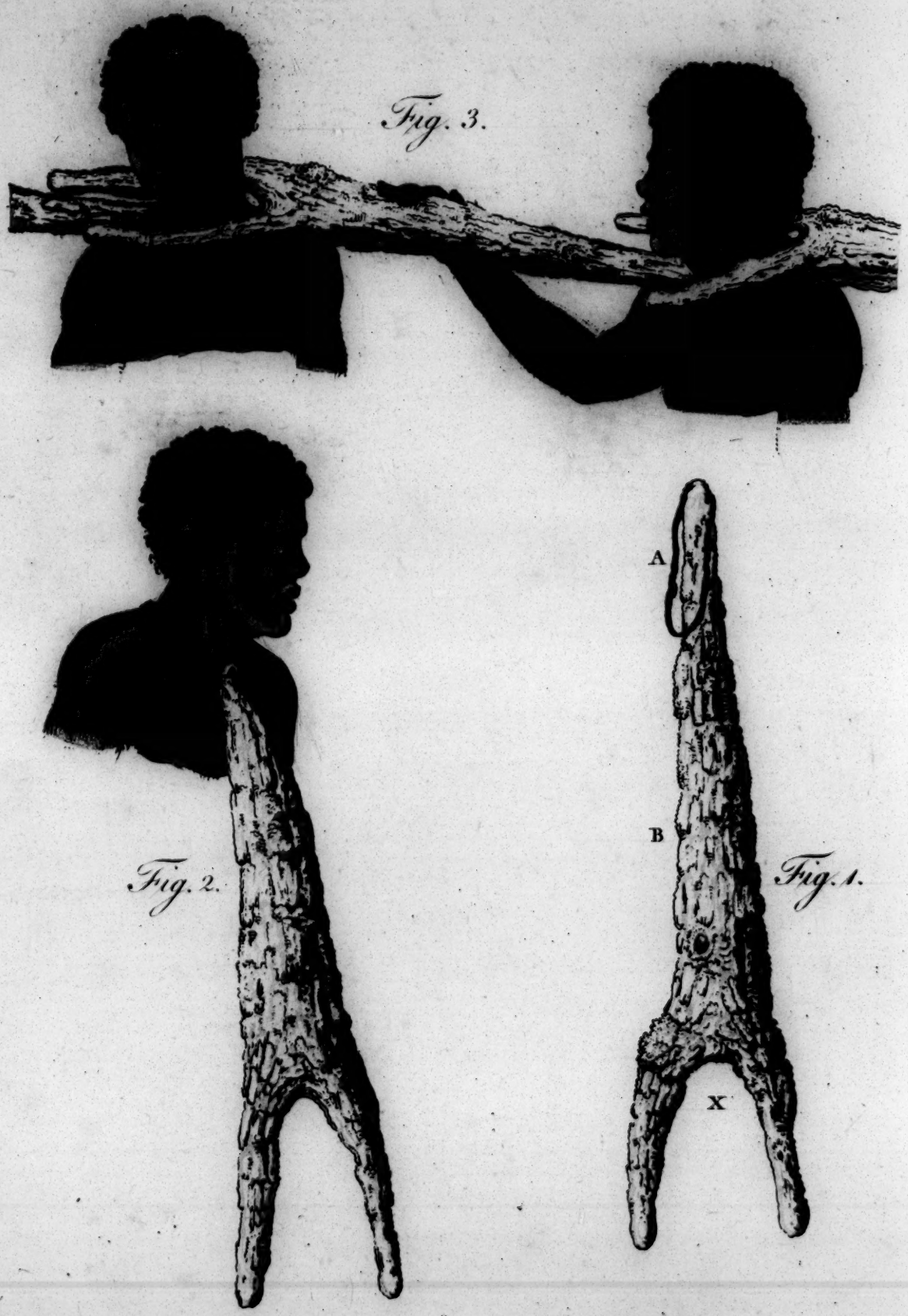

Fig. 3.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 1.

faſt to a Negro's neck in Fig. 2. It is reported to be ſo heavy and unmanageable, that it is extremely difficult for the perſon who wears it to walk, much leſs to eſcape or run away. In travelling it is ſaid to be neceſſary to lift up the log, that is thus faſtened to the neck of each, and to place the crutch of it on the ſhoulder of every preceding ſlave. Burthenſome as this inſtrument may appear to be, it is rendered more light and portable by theſe means. In this way then many of the Negro ſlaves from Bambarra to Galam have been made to travel as deſcribed in Fig. 3 of the ſame plate. When it has been neceſſary to halt, the crutch has been taken from the ſhoulders of each, and the perſon, who has worn it, has remained then as in Fig. 2, as unable to walk or manage himſelf as before, and has become almoſt as ſecure, as if he had been chained to the ſpot in which he had been made to halt. When it has been thought neceſſary to proceed, the log has again been put on the neck of every preceding ſlave.

In theſe different ways then as above deſcribed, ſuppoſing the route to be now as it was previouſly to 1787, the ſlaves are made to travel from day to day. At night their conductors endeavour to get to certain villages, which they know to be ſcattered in the way, where they reſt with their reſpective trains. On their arrival at Galam, they ſell them to the agents of the French Senegal Company, to whom alſo ſuch other ſlaves, as may have been collected in the neighbourhood, are ſold at the ſame time. Having thus diſpoſed of their different lots, they return to their reſpective homes (for they never come farther than Galam) and, when the proper ſeaſon of the year returns, they recommence their expeditions.

The

The ſlaves then, paſſed in the ways deſcribed from Bambarra to Galam, finiſh the firſt part of their route. The ſecond, which they commence under the direction of their new maſters, is by water. Here they are put on board ſmall veſſels, which are annually ſent from Fort St. Louis to receive them. Theſe are the ſame veſſels, together with all others that can be muſtered, which were mentioned in my laſt letter to have been employed from Fort St. Louis to Podor in fetching gum, millet, and other productions of the country, as well as bringing down ſuch ſlaves as were furniſhed by the Poules on one ſide of the Senegal, and the Moors on the other. This continued to be the mode of their employment, as was ſaid alſo at the ſame time, from January to July; but from Auguſt to December they are employed all of them to Galam, and become the means by which the Bambarra ſlaves make the ſecond and laſt part of their route along the Senegal to the iſland of Fort St. Louis.

This account, though it be not had immediately from thoſe, who have gone from Fort St. Louis to Galam and have met the Mundingoes there, is yet derived from the next authority; for Mr. de Villeneuve, when at Fort St. Louis, has frequently converſed with thoſe, who were employed in conveying the Bambarra ſlaves from Galam, upon this ſubject. He has alſo, as a farther confirmation, ſeen ſome of the inſtruments deſcribed, of which he has enabled me to give you the annexed ſketches; ſo that you may be aſſured, that the above deſcription is as accurate and faithful a one as you can get from any European of the route of the Bambarra ſlaves.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

your obedient ſervant,

THOMAS CLARKSON.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Paris, December, 30, 1789.

SIR,

I COME now to your ſecond Queſtion, which is, " What is " the ſtate of ſociety in which the natives of Africa, bordering on " the French eſtabliſhments there, may be ſaid to live?"

In anſwering this queſtion I ſhall confine myſelf to the inhabitants of Cayor, Sin, and Sallum, for the ſtate of ſociety there is the beſt known; and as this ſtate is nearly the ſame in the three countries, I ſhall ſpeak of Cayor, as being the moſt conſiderable tract, for the whole; noticing of courſe any cuſtom, if there ſhould be any, different there from thoſe in the other two.

And firſt, I ſhall ſpeak of the different ranks of life as they are found to exiſt in theſe countries, for I conceive this to be the moſt natural topick to begin with in anſwer to the preſent queſtion.

Theſe

Theſe ranks, as widely diſtinct from one another, may be reckoned four, comprizing the king, the blood royal, the people, and their reſpective ſlaves. On each of theſe I ſhall ſay a few words in its proper turn.

In treating of the rank, which the Damél holds as the king of Cayor (of which rank of life I intend to ſpeak the firſt) it is evident that ſome other ſubjects muſt be neceſſarily involved, ſuch as the ſort of government he holds, the methods of ſupporting it, and the military force and revenue, that are connected with the ſame. I ſhall therefore explain theſe, as naturally attached to the ſituation to be deſcribed, and ſhall explain them in the order mentioned, before I proceed to the conſideration of the three other claſſes of life, which I have before ſtated to exiſt in theſe countries.

And firſt Damél, or the king of Cayor (and the ſame may be ſaid of the kings of Sin and Sallum) may be conſidered as an abſolute monarch, if it be only from two circumſtances which have appeared in the former letters; firſt, Becauſe he can pillage his ſubjects and be not amenable to any laws; and ſecondly, Becauſe in all caſes of juriſprudence he is the ultimate judge, having it in his power, whether right or wrong, to acquit or to condemn.

The methods, which he takes to govern the countries that belong to him, are the following. Cayor is divided firſt into provinces, and each province is ruled by an officer whom he appoints, and whom he calls Laman. This Laman iſſues out the king's orders through his own diſtrict, and takes care that they ſhall be obeyed. It ſometimes happens, however, that though a certain ſpot be marked out which is called a Province, yet there is a ſmall part of it for ſome reaſon or other

other not ſubject to the Laman's orders. This ſpot then is governed by another officer, whom the king appoints, and whom he calls Fara.

Each province then, which contains many villages, is governed either by a Laman, or by a Laman and a Fara together, and of courſe all the villages in each are ſubject to their orders. There is beſides in each village an officer, totally diſtinct from the former. This officer is called the Gueraff. He may be conſidered as the Mayor of the village, for it is his buſineſs to take cognizance of any violation of the laws, to bring the offenders to trial, and to report the caſe with the deciſion upon it to the king.

The villages, which I have mentioned to have had each a Gueraff at their head for their more immediate adminiſtration, are thoſe, in which the natives only are found to dwell. There are villages however on the coaſt, where the whites, with a view of enriching themſelves by trade, are ſettled for a time, ſuch as Gandiole at the mouth of the Senegal, and Rufiſk and Dakár in the quarters oppoſite to Goree. Here the adminiſtration is rather divided. There is a Gueraff or Mayor for the natives as before, but there are two additional officers, who were originally appointed on account of the Europeans reſiding there. The firſt is called the Fitor, and was formerly the interpreter between the whites and the blacks; and the ſecond the Alcaide, who, when ſuch interpretation was made, uſed to tranſact all the buſineſs for the whites, and was conſidered as the conſul between the natives and them. The firſt of theſe perſons, though he ſtill holds the name of Fitor and the emoluments annexed to the ſituation, * now bears the office only as a ſinecure place. The

 latter

* The office of Fitor was inſtituted, when the Portugueze had commercial concerns with the people of Africa. In thoſe times therefore, the Fitor was obliged to underſtand the Portugueze language

latter ſtill diſcharges it. Thus the king rules provinces and villages, executing ſuch orders as relate to the nation at large by the Laman and Fara, ſettling the private affairs of his ſubjects by the Gueraff, and, by means of the Alcaide, adjuſting diſputes between his ſubjects and ſuch of the whites as reſide for a time in his territories, and ſuperintending trade.

The orders of the king are executed in this country, as in the others, by his military. In Cayor the peace eſtabliſhment conſiſts of from ſix to ſeven thouſand foot, but in Sin and Sallum it is much leſs. The king clothes all his military in uniform, giving to each ſoldier an orange-coloured veſt. Theſe veſts are manufactured at home, and made of the cotton, and coloured with the dyes, of the country. He feeds them alſo at his own expenſe, and makes them ſmall preſents of cloth and other articles from time to time. This is conſidered as their pay. There is no great variety of officers among them as in the European armies. The Laman is conſidered as one, the Gueraff as another, the Alcaide as a third. Theſe, as commanding under the king in provinces and villages, are the commanders alſo of his troops, ſo that three or four hundred men are not broken into many little diviſions, but are under the direction of one man.

Though the people, who are thus employed as ſoldiers, are military in point of habit, there is little or no diſcipline among them. They are aſſembled, that is, parties of them, perhaps ſeven or eight times in the year, according to the number of the feaſts of Mahomet, to be exerciſed before the king. On theſe occaſions the king ſends

language, and to interpret between the two nations: but ſince theſe commercial connexions have been diſſolved, his ſucceſſors have held the name of interpreter, and the emoluments of the office, without underſtanding any other language than their own.

previouſly

previouſly to the Laman and ſome of the other officers deſcribed to come over, and to bring with them each a quota of their reſpective provincial troops. Upon this they aſſemble. Their exerciſe is a ſort of ſham fight. They fire in the air, and run after one another. This is all, and it is done without any regularity or order.

To ſupport theſe, and other expenſes of government, certain taxes are eſtabliſhed. In the interiour villages they conſiſt of oxen, millet, and produce of every ſort, and in thoſe upon the coaſt, of fiſh and of ſuch goods as are brought there by the Europeans. In theſe villages the Gueraff collects them annually, and ſends them to the king. In the villages, however, which border on the king's reſidence, a different ſort of tax prevails. Theſe are obliged to maintain the king, that is, to furniſh his table with wine, victuals, and whatever he may want. One village ſupplies him one week, and another another, and ſo on each in its turn. On the inhabitants of theſe there is no annual tax *.

Having now mentioned every thing that ſeems to be neceſſary as relating to the king and the adminiſtration of his government, I come to thoſe of the blood royal. Of theſe it may be ſufficient to ſay, that they live in different parts of the country, that they preſerve the remembrance of their deſcent, and that they poſſeſs the privilege, in conſequence of it, of never being ſold for ſlaves.

* This account will hold good except in the villages of the Serreres, who are eſteemed a more wild people. The king is obliged to ſend to thoſe an officer called Sarſar, to collect their taxes. This officer, or travelling collector, ſtays perhaps fifteen days at a village, and then paſſes to another, and ſo on, till he has made a collection from the whole. The Serreres have no Gueraff among them, nor the ſame government as the reſt of Cayor.

The next order, of which I am to take notice, conſiſts of thoſe who may be denominated the People. Among theſe there is no diſtinction in point of rights, except in the ſacerdotal villages, and the members of theſe while they ſtay there, like thoſe of the blood royal, can never be viſited by the pillage; nor is there any one claſs, that is conſidered above another, except it may be that of the different officers of the king. There are old and young, rich and poor. The old have no other advantage than that which is given them by age. That, which their years give them, is experience, and experience recommends to favour and reſpect. As to the rich, who have ſlaves and cattle of their own, they are not conſidered as forming another claſs. That they have advantages, however, there is no doubt, but then theſe advantages are the immediate conſequences of their wealth, and not of any extraordinary right; for, in the firſt place, they are not exempt from the pillage, but eſcape being ſold, by having it in their power to furniſh a ranſom ſlave. They are, again, as we have ſeen in a former letter, amenable to the ſame laws as the reſt, but ſometimes eſcape their decrees in conſequence of their ability to compound in the ſame manner. Theſe are the only diſtinctions, which I have to make with reſpect to the people of Sallum, Sin, and Cayor.

The ſlaves in theſe countries, who form the fourth rank of ſociety, are exceedingly few. There is here and there a perſon of condition, who may have from five to ten, and perhaps another, who may have from ten to fifty of them. But there are but very few of this deſcription of perſons, and of courſe but very few ſlaves. The ſlaves do not bear the proportion of more than one to fifteen hundred, if compared with the people. It was calculated by the beſt cenſus which General Boufflers and Mr. de Villeneuve could make, that there were fifteen hundred thouſand perſons in Cayor, and about a thouſand ſlaves.

Theſe ſlaves then, ſmall as their numbers are, are of two claſſes, namely, either ſuch as have once known freedom but have loſt it by means of the pillage, or in conſequence of real or imputed crimes, and ſuch as are ſlaves by birth.

Theſe ſlaves, both of the one and the other claſs, are allowed to marry. They chooſe their own wives. A ſlave in one family may, by the maſter's conſent, marry one in another. In this caſe the two do not dwell together, but ſee each other at times. A ſlave has often, like the maſter, more than one wife: the ſame law, which has been ſaid to attach to the wife of a free man in the caſe of adultery, attaches alſo to a ſlave. And again, ſuppoſing the proprietor of a ſlave ſhould have a ſon or a relation pillaged in the night, he would make a ſacrifice of his ſlave for the redemption of ſuch relation or ſon. Except in ſuch extraordinary caſes, it may be ſet down as an eſtabliſhed rule in this country, that a perſon born in ſlavery, whether deſcended from perſons pillaged or convicted of crimes, or from perſons themſelves born ſlaves, are never ſold.

The occupations of theſe ſlaves may be divided into domeſtick and agricultural. The men in the former caſe do out of doors work, collect and bring in wood, and fetch water. The women pound millet, ſpin cotton, and do other things in the family way. In the latter caſe, the men cultivate the ground. They begin their labour at five in the morning, and leave off at eleven for the whole day: they ſeldom or ever work afterwards, except in harveſt, ſo that their labour is not more than the ordinary exerciſe which men ſhould take. The women ſlaves do little more than gather cotton at the proper ſeaſon of the year, in which they are ſometimes aſſiſted, but not often, by the men. In ſhort both the men and the the women paſs whole days together and do

do little or nothing. In reſpect to the mode or fatigue of their labour while employed, there is no diſtinction between the maſter and the ſlave. There are very few people, as has been ſaid before, who have any ſlaves at all; and thoſe, who have a few, work in general with them in the field, nor can any one diſcover the difference of their rank from their employments. As to whips, chains, or any other inſtruments of torture for ſlaves in theſe countries, they are totally unknown.

The food, which is given to the ſlaves, conſiſts of millet, milk, fiſh, and fleſh, but of the latter little, except what may have been collected from the chace; for meat is not much uſed by any deſcription of people whatever in theſe countries. But here alſo, as in the former caſe, we find ſlavery leſs a diſtinction in reality than in the name: for they eat in company with the children of their maſters, and partake of the ſame repaſt. It may not be amiſs, perhaps, to add here, that they ſometimes live in the ſame houſe, and ſleep in the ſame room.

Having now ſaid all that I intended on the ſubject of the four different orders of the king, the blood royal, the people, and their reſpective ſlaves, I ſhall beg leave only to add, as it appears to me to be a better place to do it in than any other, ſomething relative to the religion of the country, before I cloſe my letter.

The religion of theſe countries, if we except the two Serreres, who from their wild ſtate are conſidered as having no religion at all, is Mahometaniſm. There are whole villages, inhabited by the prieſts of Mahomet and their relations, and by theſe alone. Theſe prieſts in their own tongue are called Serims, but Marabous by the French. The villages, which contain them, and which I have diſtinguiſhed

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by the name of the ſacerdotal, have the privilege of never being moleſted by the pillage. It may happen, however, that a Serim may be in another village, when the pillage is executed, and if ſo, it will be difficult for him to eſcape being ſold with the reſt. In theſe villages the Serims perform their worſhip every day.

At Dakár there are two moſques, the one open and the other thatched, for the performance of the religion of Mahomet. To the open one the Serims in the neighbourhood repair and worſhip in a body, falling proſtrate in one uniform poſition on the ground, and continuing ſtedfaſt and immoveable in it during the time of prayer. Among theſe Serims there is no head. There is no other diſtinction than that which ſuperiour knowledge may create, and this is ſuperiour reſpect. As for the bulk of the people, they ſeldom or ever aſſemble except for circumciſion. They know little about the religion of the country, and, a few external rites excepted, are little of Mahometans but by name.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient ſervant,

T. CLARKSON.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

Paris, January 1, 1790.

SIR,

IN my laſt letter I deſcribed the people of Sallum, Sin, and Cayor, in a civil capacity, and as diſtinguiſhable therefore into four bodies in conſequence of the four claſſes of life to which they reſpectively belonged. In the preſent I ſhall conſider them in the light of inhabitants of the ſoil. This will lead me to conſider the diſpoſition and ſtate of their villages, houſes, lands, and property they poſſeſs, a topick, which appears to me to follow the preceding, not only as naturally but as advantageouſly as any other towards elucidating the points contained in your ſecond queſtion.

With reſpect to the villages in theſe countries (which is the firſt part of the ſubject to be purſued) all thoſe, which may be called Marine, are built cloſe on the ſhore. In the interiour parts, however, many circumſtances have contributed to fix them where they are found. The natives in general wiſh to be near the foreſts,

as

as affording them a retreat in caſe of invaſion, and therefore we generally find their villages ſituated there: but if there ſhould not be good water near the ſpot which they may fancy, or land ſufficiently fertile to produce what they want to raiſe, they build them in other parts. Good water is a ſufficient recommendation of itſelf to determine the ſite of a village; good land another: hence there are many villages in the open country as well as among the trees. Hence there is a great variety of appearance in their ſituations. The Serreres, however, who have been deſcribed to be in a wilder ſtate than the reſt, are found almoſt univerſally in the woods.

I come now to the houſes in theſe villages. And firſt, as to the exteriour of them, they are made of ſtraw. They are univerſally of a round form, and have one door only. When built to a certain height, which is very moderate, the roof gradually tapers from thence to a point at the top. There is no regularity in the ſituation of theſe houſes, that is, there are no regular ſtreets. If a family be only ſufficient in number to occupy one houſe, that houſe is built by itſelf, and ſurrounded by a fence of ſtraw: if a family, conſiſting of fathers, mothers, children, couſins, or of an huſband and many wives, or of a maſter and many ſlaves, be ſufficient to occupy two, three, four, or more houſes, theſe are built at a little diſtance from each other, and encircled by a wall of ſtraw. Nor are the houſes of the families in theſe villages ſituated according to any precedence. The king's houſe is in the middle, or on one ſide, as it happens. There is no determined ſpot appropriated to rank. Care, however, is generally taken that a free ſpace be left open for what is called the Publick Place of the village, a place where all publick conſultations are held, and all matters of controverſy ſettled.

The king's houſe is undoubtedly diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of his ſubjects by its ſize. It is alſo ſurrounded in general by a hedge of thorns inſtead of a fence of ſtraw. It is diſtinguiſhed again by having a domeſtick at each gate in the hedge or fence, but no military: for the military are uſed only on the feaſts of Mahomet, as already deſcribed, or for pillage, or when the king goes out publickly, or to war. The king's domeſtick officers are however numerous. There is a captain of his gate, a captain of his dogs, and a variety of other tituled obſervants of his will.

As to the interiour of the houſes of theſe villages it is extremely ſimple; their furniture conſiſts of a bed, and this is all, if we except one or two rude domeſtick utenſils. The manner of conſtructing the bed is as follows: Three large wooden ſtakes are driven down into the ground or floor of the hut in a row, about the diſtance of three feet from each other. At a proper width, and exactly oppoſite and parallel to theſe, three other ſtakes are driven down in the ſame manner, all of which together with the former appear about a foot or a foot and an half above the floor of the hut. The heads of theſe ſtakes having been all of them previouſly notched, three ſtout poles are then laid in the notches from ſide to ſide, and upon theſe again other thin poles lengthways, ſo as to croſs them and form a grated ſurface or floor capable of bearing a conſiderable weight. Upon this the natives place a mat of ſtraw and leaves intermixed, upon which they ſleep.

This is the general and almoſt only furniture of the people. Nor is the Gueraff much better off. He may have perhaps a rude cheſt, in which he puts his brandy and other articles; and in this conſiſts the

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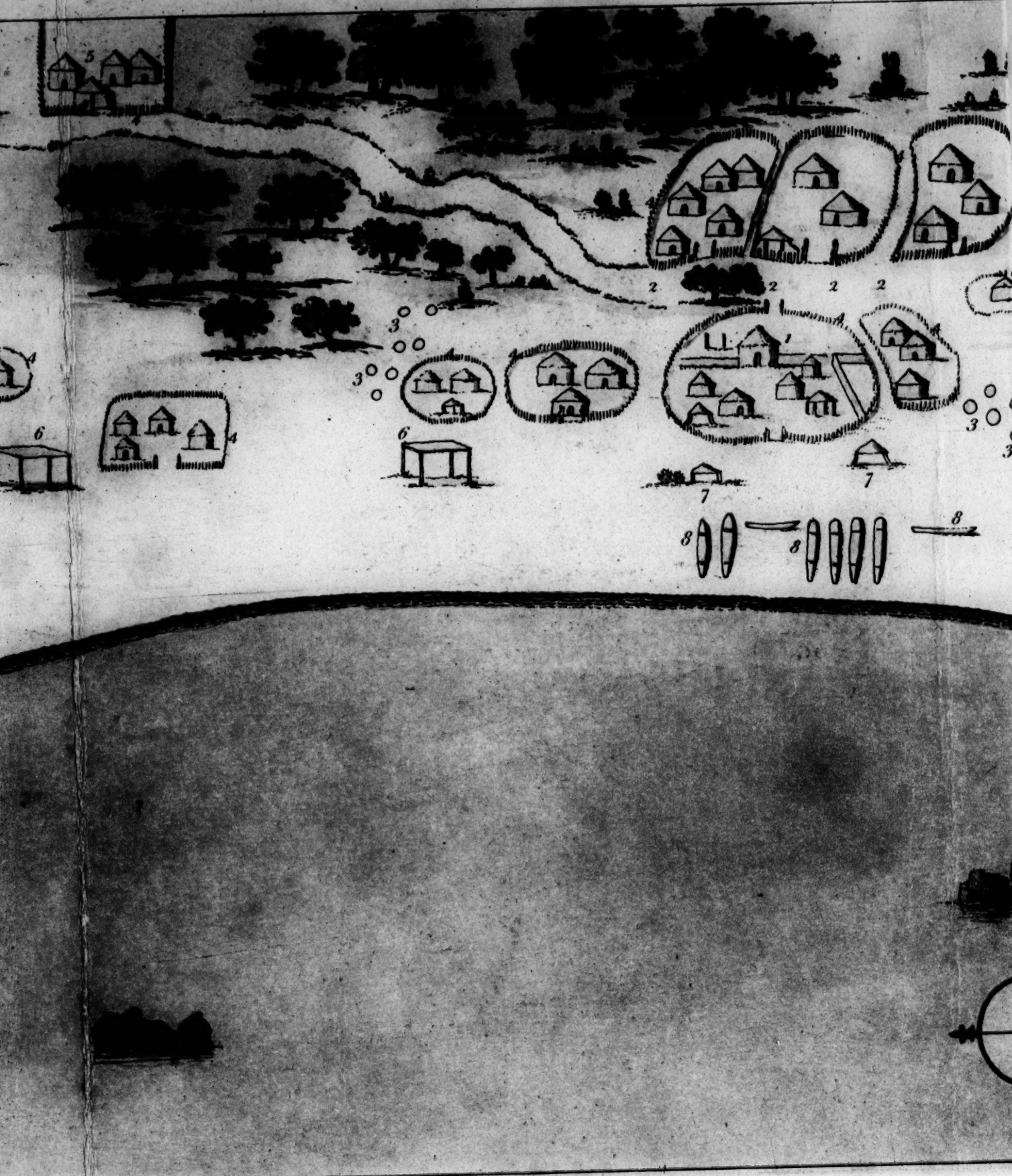
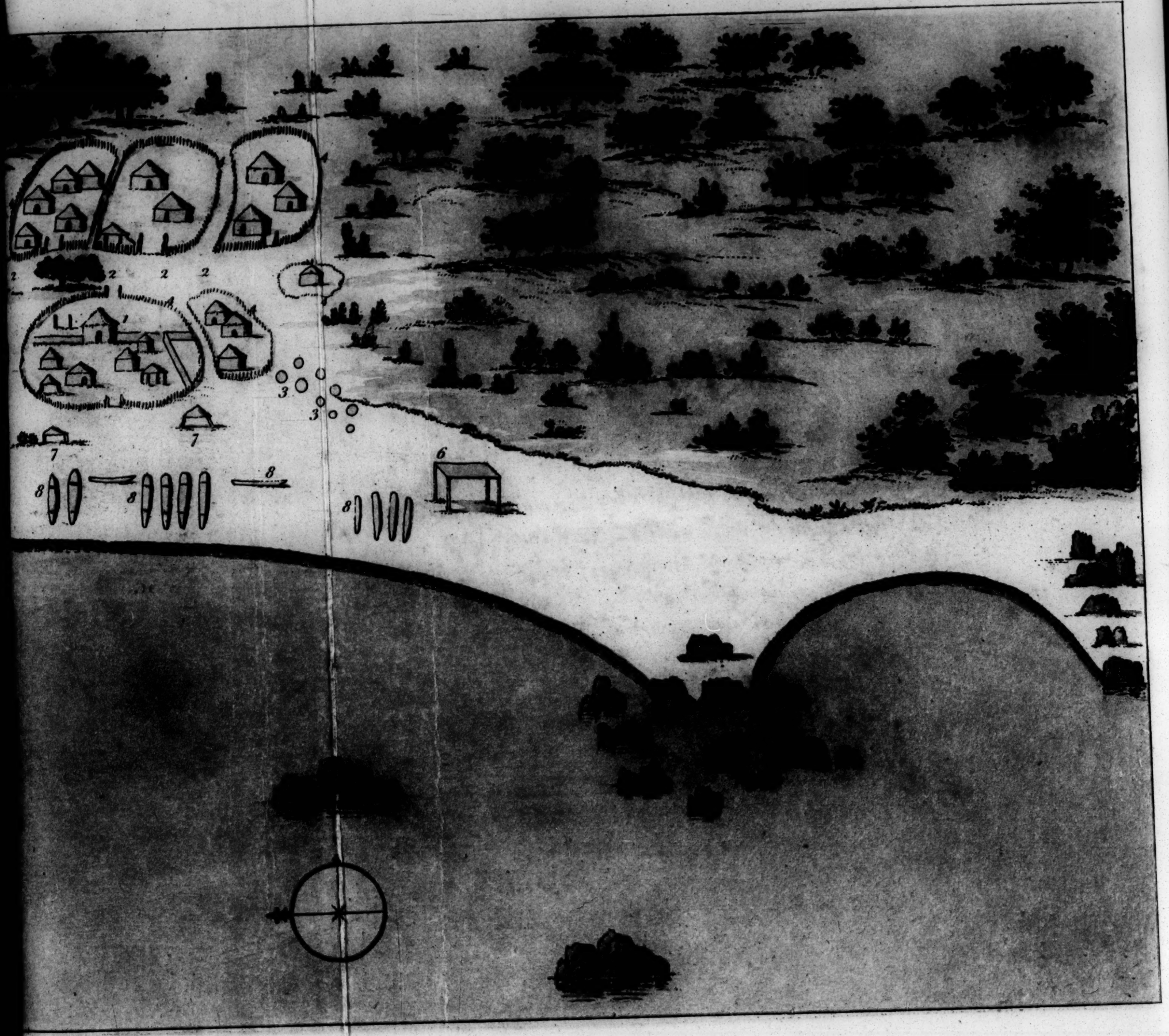


Plan of the Village of Portudal



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the only diſtinction between the two. As to the king himſelf, he has but little more to diſtinguiſh the interiour of his houſe than the bed and cheſt deſcribed. He has certain ſtools for the convenience of ſitting down. Theſe ſtools are nearly of the form of a common hour glaſs, though of courſe much larger, that is, they are narrower in the middle than at the ends, which may be uſed alternately either as a ſupporter or a ſeat. It is this piece of furniture which places the ſovereign above the reſt.

In order to give you a better idea of the houſes and villages of which I have been juſt ſpeaking, I have procured for you the annexed plan. It contains a ſketch of the village of Portudal, as it was taken by Mr. de Villeneuve on the ſpot. Fig. 1 repreſents the king's court, that is, his reſidence when he comes to Portudal. Fig. 2, the Publick Place of the village before deſcribed. Fig. 3 the place on each ſide of the village where the natives keep their millet. The grain belonging to every family is thus brought together, and in certain baſkets of their own manfacture depoſited in a common ſpot. Fig. 4, the incloſures which contain the houſe or houſes belonging to each family in the village; each family, as has been ſaid before, occupying one or more houſes, and ſurrounding them with a fence of ſtraw. Fig. 5, the houſe of the Alcaide, or Conſul for the whites who tranſact buſineſs at Portudal. Fig. 6, a ſort of ſhed called Calde, or a penthouſe, where the natives work to avoid the heat of the ſun. Fig. 7, ſties, detached from the houſes, in which they keep their pigs. Fig. 8, the canoes of the inhabitants in the manner they generally lie upon the beach.

Having now given you as good an idea as I am able of the houſes and villages of theſe countries, as occupied by the natives of them,

I come, for my next point, to the lands, which they poſſeſs. Theſe are in general as near the villages as the fertility of the ſoil will permit; in ſome places cloſe to them, in others ſometimes a quarter of a league, or half a league off, and in others more.

Their lands may be divided into three ſorts; lands for cotton and indigo; lands for the more immediate neceſſaries of life, ſuch as millet; and lands for paſture. In the diſtribution of theſe lands, that is, fixing their ſituation nearer to the villages in proportion as one is rich, or more remote in proportion as another is poor, no ſuch diſtinction prevails. Each family has occupied that, which it thought would anſwer its purpoſe beſt, or that which it pitched upon the firſt. There are no diſputes with reſpect to land. If a man has not enough, he may take more, and as much more as he pleaſes. There are thouſands of acres unſettled, ſo that he has only to chooſe a ſpot, which is not occupied by another.

The land however, which is poſſeſſed in theſe countries, is not poſſeſſed by individuals but by whole families. All the relations in a village, fathers, mothers, brothers, ſons, couſins, hold one ſpot, which ſerves them all, and which is as much as they can cultivate among them, or is adequate to their wants. The figure of this ſpot is generally round. If it be laid out in indigo, cotton, or millet, it is incloſed with thorns, leſt the deer or other wild game getting into it ſhould deſtroy the crop. Theſe thorns are often ſuch as the men have cut down, and afterwards worked into a fence, or ſuch as in the clearing of new land they have left ſtanding in ſuch parts as they determined ſhould be the boundary of their lands. Thus are their lands like the places of their habitations. They are encircled by a fence;

fence; they aſſume a round appearance like the ſpot upon which the houſes ſtand; and are poſſeſſed by whole families.

It may not be amiſs to obſerve here, that the portion of land, which I have deſcribed to have been encloſed and occupied by a family, is allotted but to one ſort of produce. The ſame family, that wants millet for cuſcus or bread, wants cotton for clothes, but in this caſe they never divide the ſame incloſure for the production of the two. The indigo plantations are ſeparate from the cotton, and the cotton again from the millet. The indigo are the neareſt in general to the town, the cotton next, and the millet the moſt remote; ſo that there is neither a mixture of two ſorts of produce in one encloſure, nor are encloſures of different ſorts of produce interſperſed. Hence one family may have three ſeparate encloſures belonging to them, according to their induſtry or their wants. With reſpect to tobacco, there is but little of it, and there are no encloſures for that; and with reſpect to the cultivation of indigo, one exception is to be made to the preceding account, which is, that the Serreres do not cultivate it at all.

As to the lands for paſture (the laſt diviſion to be ſpoken of) they are not encloſed like the reſt, but are all open. There are ſome inhabitants of the villages, who have cattle, the uſe of which is rather for the milk than the meat, for in theſe countries meat is ſeldom eaten except on the feaſts of Mahomet. The king has many cows, the Gueraff ſome, and the rich ſuch as they have inherited or acquired by trade. All theſe, however, feed in one herd. They are tended by two or three men and as many boys. Theſe take charge of them as well in the night as in the day, for which purpoſe they ſleep

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in ſmall huts or cabins erected upon the lands where the cattle feed. The occupation of herdſmen is here followed as a trade.

In ſpeaking of property it will be neceſſary to make a diſtinction here, which otherwiſe may not be thought to ſubſiſt. The lands or houſes, which have been deſcribed to be within an encloſure, do not belong to any one individual, as I have ſtated before, but to all the members conjointly of the family which occupies them. This, however, is not the caſe with property of another kind. Perhaps an induſtrious man, by applying himſelf to ſome commercial purſuit, becomes poſſeſſed of cattle. Perhaps another with great care and trouble has formed a palmery, with a view of ſupplying the market with palm wine. Such cattle then and ſuch palmery belong excluſively to thoſe who acquired them. Theſe and other ſimilar ſorts of property are diſtinct from the firſt. They are wholly at the diſpoſal of the proprietor during life, but at his death they deſcend to the next heirs. The property which a father (for inſtance) has of this kind, is divided equally, when he dies, among his legitimate children, who may, as has been ſaid in a former letter, be the offspring of three different wives.

Such, Sir, to conclude my letter, is the arrangement, as it is found to take place, of the villages, houſes, and lands, of the inhabitants of Sallum, Sin, and Cayor. To theſe original houſes and villages ſo occupied, to theſe original lands ſo laid out and poſſeſſed, and to the ſimplicity of life ſo neceſſarily following ſuch an arrangement, theſe inhabitants are ſo extremely attached, as to conſider it the greateſt evil in life to leave them. This is particularly obvious after any ſerious pillage, which may have obliged them to betake themſelves to the woods; for in theſe woods they have been known to wait with

with patience for years, till they have thought the danger entirely over, and then to ſeek their ancient habitations again. As one proof among many others the following may ſuffice. Mr. de Villeneuve in his journey over land from Cape Verd to the iſland of Fort St. Louis, which journey is marked in the map, met with two villages, Tiockmat and Little Boro, which had been deſerted by the inhabitants in conſequence of the pillage. On paſſing by the former he obſerved ſeveral of the natives at work, as if employing themſelves in repairing the ancient huts. This occaſioned him to ſtop and to converſe with them, during which he learned that theſe were the ancient inhabitants of Tiockmat, from whence they had been driven by the pillage; that after having lived for many moons in the foreſts they had reſolved upon coming out, and re-eſtabliſhing themſelves on their native ſpot, and that they were then repairing their old habitations with a view of occupying them again. This was the ſubſtance of their converſation with Mr. de Villeneuve, and it was a fact well known in the country, that Tiockmat had been pillaged by Damél full five years before this event of the eſtabliſhment of the natives, as then reſolved on and taking place.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient ſervant,

T. CLARKSON.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

SIR, *PARIS, JANUARY 3, 1790.*

HAVING deſcribed to you in my two laſt letters the different ranks of life among the people of Sallum, Sin, and Cayor, and having alſo brought them to your view as they live in their houſes and villages, and poſſeſs their lands, there remains but one more topick to ſuggeſt to your notice, before I conſider myſelf to have replied ſufficiently to your ſecond queſtion.

This topick will comprehend the different occupations of theſe people, or the various ways in which the inhabitants of theſe countries employ themſelves in the courſe of the year.

The occupations then to be found at Sallum, Sin, and Cayor, may be divided into ſtationary and itinerant. The firſt ſtationary employment, according to my acceptation of the word, is agriculture. If the

the natives wiſh to clear new land, or ſuch as has lain fallow (for they never cultivate the ſame land but once in three years) they reſort immediately to the ſpot. There are two inſtruments which they uſe upon theſe occaſions. The firſt of them is an axe, with which they chop the larger trunks of * underwood. This axe differs from our own, inaſmuch as the wood paſſes through the iron with us, while in this the iron paſſes through the wood. The other is a kind of garden-ſpud, with a fork at the handle. This is applied to the roots; that is, the end, which is of iron, cuts them through, and they are carried away by the fork at the other end, as before deſcribed. The clearing of land is an occupation belonging to the men.

With theſe inſtruments then the natives, before the † rainy ſeaſon begins, prepare their land. On the firſt of July, or thereabouts, they commence with their millet. Of this there are two ſpecies, the ſmall and the great. They begin with the former. To plant this, a man uſes a ſort of ſpade, which differs from our own as far as the iron work is of a ſemicircular inſtead of an oblong form. His firſt proceſs is that of digging a hole in the ground. Having made this, he advances about fifteen inches and digs another. In this way he continues in a ſtraight line till he comes to the end of his incloſure. Having made one ſtraight line of holes, at the diſtance from each other deſcribed, he makes another parallel to the former, and ſo on till he has opened the whole of his land. While he is engaged in this work

* There are thouſands of acres of champaign land in theſe countries, that have only a ſort of underwood upon them. Theſe the inhabitants ſelect when they want new land, for to clear the foreſts for this purpoſe would be an endleſs taſk.

† The rainy ſeaſon begins in June and ends in October.

a woman follows him, and puts ſeeds into each of the holes which he has made, covering them afterwards with the earth.

The ſeed, thus lodged in each of the holes, is ſuffered to remain without interruption for three weeks, when the perſon, who has ſown it, viſits it again. He finds during his abſence that between theſe holes a number of weeds and roots have ſhooted up. Theſe he clears away with the forked garden-ſpud as before deſcribed. Having done this, he makes new holes between each of thoſe which he made in the beginning of July. A woman follows him as before, and puts into them the large millet. At the latter end of September, or beginning of October, the ſmall millet ſown in the firſt of theſe holes is ready. The men cut it, and the women and children carry it away. In three weeks afterwards, or at the latter end of October, the large millet ſown in the laſt is ready alſo, and it is cut and taken away as before. Thus they have two crops in the year.

When the millet is thus gathered, it is carried to a place fixed upon at a ſmall diſtance from the village, where all the millet belonging to the inhabitants is kept, as was deſcribed in the laſt plate. Each family has a large baſket, made of twigs, of a conical form, about five feet high with a top to it, which takes off, in which it is depoſited. Here each family depoſits its own crop, ſo that the millet of the whole village is kept together. Though it be often at a diſtance from the villages and among the woods, and there be nobody to guard it, it is generally in perfect ſecurity from theft.

The deſcription of people, who work in the manner mentioned, are the proprietors of the lands. Each family works for its own

ſuſtenance

ſuſtenance and ſupport. Amidſt the labourers a ſlave is ſometimes found, but not often, becauſe, as I have ſaid before, the ſlaves in this country do not bear the proportion of more than one to fifteen hundred, if compared with the free men.

The millet then takes up the time of the natives from July till the beginning of November. In December they gather their crop of cotton, and their indigo in May.

The people, who thus cultivate their lands, and are employed (taking in the different ſorts of produce) for the months of July, Auguſt, September, October, November, December, and May, are not idle for the other ſeaſons of the year. They betake themſelves, in the interim, to other ſtationary employments, ſuch as the making of mats and ſoap. The former are made of leaves and the twigs of trees, the latter of certain inſects and greaſe. The former are made promiſcuouſly by all, but the latter by women only.

According to the advantages or diſadvantages, which the ſituation of the country occaſions, other ſtationary occupations ariſe or are forbidden to exiſt. Thus, as an inſtance of the firſt, the villagers on the ſea coaſt employ themſelves in fiſhing. They go out to ſea for this purpoſe, and are engaged in it, off and on the coaſt, from February to June. The fiſh which they catch, they preſerve by drying in the ſun. At the end of the fiſhing ſeaſon it begins to be time, from what I have ſaid before, to cultivate their lands. They betake themſelves therefore to this employment. Hence (including the fiſhing ſeaſon and the months already ſtated to have been the months for huſbandry) this deſcription of people have ſufficient work for the year round.

As an example of the latter, the following may ſuffice. It would be the moſt natural to ſuppoſe that the boats, in which theſe fiſhermen follow their occupation, are built upon the ſhore; but it is not the caſe: Firſt, Becauſe there is but little wood upon that part of the coaſt where they live; and, Secondly, Becauſe that little is not ſo good as in the interiour parts. Hence ariſes by neceſſity the buſineſs of boat-building at the diſtance of thirty leagues from the ſhore, and in a part of the country where there are no rivers to bring them down when made. The Serreres of Baol, who have been deſcribed as living among the woods, are one deſcription of people who follow this employment. Theſe are free men, and are not aided in their work by any ſlaves. They cut down the trees firſt, they then ſhape the canoes, but do not hollow them, leſt, in pulling them over land acroſs the country (for there is no other way of conveying them) they ſhould break. When they have ſhaped them they faſten to them the cords of the country, and by the aſſiſtance of the village drag them about ſix leagues. Here they are aſſiſted by the next village, who drag them about ſix leagues farther, and ſo on, till they reach the ſhore. They give the people, who aſſiſt them, a dinner or repaſt only for their pains, with which they are quite content. Notwithſtanding the wonderful trouble and perſeverance from the felling of the trees to the delivery of theſe boats upon the ſhore, they ſell them at a price which would be hardly credited by an European. A boat, that will hold two people, may be bought for about * twelve livres or four bars, and a large canoe of forty feet for an hundred livres only. Thoſe, furniſhed by the Serreres of Baol, are dragged to different parts of the coaſt between Point de Serenes and Gambarou, and are generally of the length of twenty-five feet; boats of theſe dimenſions only being in uſe between theſe limits.

* Ten ſhillings Engliſh.

Thoſe

Thoſe in uſe from Gambarou to Cape Rouge are made in the vicinity of the Serreres of Cayor, and are about twelve feet long.

Thoſe in uſe about Sallum are in length about forty feet, and are made by the natives up the Gambia. Of all theſe boatmakers it may be proper to add, that they follow this occupation only in the dry ſeaſon; for in the rainy they cultivate their lands: ſo that like the fiſhermen before mentioned they are employed for the year round.

Among other ſtationary occupations, I will mention but one more, which is the making of ſalt.

In the countries, to which this deſcription extends, there are but three or four villages, from which the whole of the inhabitants are ſupplied with ſalt. At the village of Bieurt, oppoſite to Gandiole at the mouth of the Senegal, the inhabitants make this article, and ſupply Cayor and the Moors. On the banks of the river Silif, which runs into the river Palmarin in the dominions of Barbaſin, there are two or three villages, among which is Sangay, where the inhabitants are occupied in the ſame manner. There are not leſs perhaps than five or ſix hundred of them, men and women together, who are thus employed in the latter. Theſe ſupply the other two countries mentioned in theſe letters, namely, Sin, and Sallum.

I come now to what may be called the itinerant employments. Theſe may be divided into two kinds, namely, into ſuch as are exerciſed either by the natives or by foreigners. Of thoſe of the firſt deſcription may be conſidered the occupation of working in gold. People, free men, who exerciſe the profeſſion of goldſmiths, are found in the courts of the kings, where they principally get their bread.

When

When the kings have done with them (for they do not employ them the whole year round) they go about the villages, and work for ſuch as can afford to pay them. Their work is exceedingly neat, and is often as good as is found among the Europeans in the ſame line. Their profeſſion, however, is a totally diſtinct one, for they neither cultivate land, nor meddle with any other trade.

A ſecond itinerant occupation is that of ſmiths. There are two or three people in every village, who make the iron in the inſtruments of huſbandry deſcribed. Theſe make alſo the heads of lances and ſpears, as well as ornaments in copper, for ſuch as pleaſe to employ them. Theſe are free people, and are never aſſiſted by ſlaves; there being but few in this country, as I have ſaid before, and theſe being rather the appendages of luxury, than the inſtruments of labour. Theſe people ſtay perhaps a year or two in a village, and then go to another. They have no land, for they have no time to cultivate it. Were they to chooſe to divide their time between agriculture and their profeſſion, they might have as much of it as they pleaſed, for there are thouſands of acres to ſpare.

A third itinerant employment, which is exerciſed as a trade, is that of dying. The ſecret of dying in theſe countries is in the poſſeſſion of the women alone, nor is it in every village that it is known. There are only a few villages, in which theſe dyers are to be found. They of courſe go about the country from village to village, and perform the different commiſſions, which the inhabitants may have for them in that line.

The fourth, fifth, and ſixth itinerant employments, of which I intend next to ſpeak, are not ſeparately purſued by individuals, like the

the preceding, but undertaken and held together; ſo that he, who profeſſes any one of them, profeſſes all of them jointly as a trade. The natives, who are brought up to theſe joint employments, are called Gueriotts in their own tongue. The firſt of their occupations is that of becoming drum-beaters or comedians to the king. They may be conſidered as a ſort of ſtrolling players. When the kings do not employ them in this line, they try to gain their ſubſiſtence from the people. To amuſe the latter they beat their drums, talk nonſenſe, rehearſe the feats of their anceſtors, call them brave fellows, and, in ſhort, do what is done by the ſame deſcription of people in Europe. When, however, neither the kings nor the people have any employment for them in this line, they ſupport themſelves by their two other occupations. The firſt of theſe is that of working in cotton. For this purpoſe they always travel with their looms, which are ſhort, light, and portable. The art of making cloth is almoſt wholly in their hands, and is ſo well executed, that no European cloth is better fabricated. The ſecond of their occupations is that of working in leather. Of this they make ſcabbards for knives, daggers, and ſwords, ſmall ſaddles, pouches, ſandals, * griſgris, and other articles. Following theſe employments they travel from village to village. Their countrymen, however, have ſome ſuperſtitious notions about them, and will not ſuffer them, when they die, to be buried near the ſame ſpot with themſelves.

A ſeventh itinerant occupation is that of conjurers. Thoſe, who follow it, ramble up and down, like the Gueriotts, ſeldom or ever ſtaying more than four or five days in a place. On coming into a village they are frequently ſent for, to amuſe the Gueraff, as well as

* A ſort of leathern ornament, which the natives wear as a charm, or protection againſt injury or miſchief.

the

the king, if he ſhould be then reſident in it. If, beſides playing before theſe, they can get into the houſe of a man of condition to ſhew their tricks, ſo much the better, for they are better paid. If not, they get as many of the people together as they can. They then exhibit their art. It conſiſts of ſlight of hand with balls, knives, and ſuch other things as are beſt adapted to their deſign. Two only of theſe conjurers travel or exhibit their profeſſion together. When the exhibition is over, a collection is made, at which time the ſpectators contribute cloth, millet, and other articles in return for the diverſion afforded them.

It is from theſe conjurers that the notion of witchcraft, or that there are perſons in every village capable of being acceſſory to the death of others by ſecret means (the puniſhment for which as well as the ſingular method of trial for it I deſcribed in my ſecond letter) may be conſidered to be kept up. For the people behold theſe conjurers with ſurprize; they conſider them as doing ſupernatural things; and as they ſee no reaſon why they ſhould not be capable of communicating their art, they believe on certain occaſions that there are wizzards in their own villages.

It may not be improper to mention here, that the above occupation is ſometimes attended with bad conſequences to its followers. It has happened that they have been accuſed of witchcraft and ſold. Such inſtances, however, are but rare; for there is not an equal number of inducements to accuſe theſe as other people, moſt of them being crooked, lame, blind of an eye, or ſuch as have ſome bodily defect, ſo that very little emolument is to be derived from the ſale of them.

Having now deſcribed ſome of the itinerant employments which are exerciſed by the inhabitants of Sallum, Sin, and Cayor, I ſhall juſt ſpeak of one of the ſame deſcription, which is exerciſed by foreigners. This is the manufacturing of wood. In the empire of Oualoff there are certain people who inhabit the foreſts and are known by the name of Laobés. Theſe Laobés employ themſelves in their own country in making peſtles, mortars, and every ſort of wooden inſtrument, that is in uſe either in Sallum, Sin, or Cayor: ſo that almoſt every wooden utenſil to be ſeen there is of their manufacture. When they have made a quantity they ſend them away under the care of a party of their own people. Theſe have the patience to carry them in large bundles upon their heads, and to travel with them in this manner for many days. When they have diſpoſed of them, they return into the woods of Oualoff, carrying back to their countrymen ſuch commodities as they have received in exchange.

Theſe then are ſome of the occupations, both ſtationary and itinerant, exerciſed in the countries which are the ſubjects of theſe letters, by means of which each is enabled to obtain his reſpective wants. The Gueriott, for inſtance, can always furniſh himſelf with clothes, but having no land, he is obliged to derive part of his ſubſiſtence from his occupation of Drum-beater or Comedian to the king. For another part of it he has recourſe to the huſbandman, who gives him a quantity of millet for working his crop of cotton into cloth. The huſbandman is thus ſupplied with raiment, ſufficient for himſelf, and with an overplus for trade; but as he muſt have fiſh (for this is deemed a neceſſary part of his ſuſtenance) he has recourſe, in his turn, to the inhabitant of the ſhore. The inhabitant of the ſhore, beſides following the occupation of a fiſherman, cultivates as I ſaid before his own millet, but he has often no time for the planting of cotton for his

clothes. For his fiſh then he receives the overplus of the huſband-man's cloth juſt mentioned. The ſmith, on the other hand, having no land, and but one occupation, muſt be in want of both millet, fiſh, and clothes. Theſe he gets from the former three in exchange for his ſpears, and inſtruments of agriculture in iron.

Thus is a great deal of buſineſs tranſacted by means of barter, both in the vicinity of the ſhore, and in the interiour parts. There is a frequent communication between the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages for this purpoſe, each offering for ſale that which he poſſeſſes to procure that which he wants. In Sallum, many articles of merchandize are carried up and down the country in boats, for there are many rivers there. In Sin, where the ſame advantages are not to be found, many of them are carried upon aſſes; and in Cayor, upon aſſes alſo, till you come near the mouth of the Senegal, where oxen are in uſe. Numbers, however, of the natives travel with large bundles of merchandize on their heads, and their perſeverance upon theſe occaſions is aſtoniſhing, for they not only diſregard the weight of them, but with this weight, enormous as it frequently is, they will travel ſix French leagues in the courſe of a ſingle day.

I have now, Sir, furniſhed you (in deſcribing the different occupations of the people of Sallum, Sin, and Cayor) with the laſt topick I propoſed to myſelf as connected with your ſecond queſtion. On thoſe points which I have already ſpoken to, I have no more light to offer, nor can I conceive that there is any more that you can want. I have therefore fulfilled the taſk I undertook at the beginning of theſe letters. As, however, it may be of uſe to you that I ſhould point out from the contents of them certain poſitions, which

which you may have it in your power to reſort to on certain occaſions, I ſhall continue my correſpondence for another day. Nor will you be offended with this interference of mine as any impeachment upon your own underſtanding and genius: for quick as your penetration is, yet as you are unacquainted with the various arguments adduced in defence of the Slave-Trade, it is but reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that many obſervations will eſcape you, as you may not in every inſtance know the value of ſome of the ground you paſs over, in ſurveying the contents of the preceding letters. It is this circumſtance, and this alone, which has induced me to offer you my ſervices on this new occaſion, and I ſhall be happy in realizing them, if I hear nothing from you to the contrary to-morrow.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient ſervant,

THOMAS CLARKSON.

LETTER IX.

Paris, January 4, 1790.

SIR,

I PROMISED you yeſterday, with your leave, to advert to certain parts of the foregoing letters. I ſit down for this purpoſe to-day, and ſhall refer to thoſe and thoſe of them only, which, if applied to the different arguments advanced by the advocates for the Slave-Trade, would be anſwers to them, as far as the matter contained in theſe letters is capable of affording ſuch.

Among the arguments uſed in juſtification of the continuance of the trade, there are three, deduced from the ſituation of the natives of Africa previouſly to their coming into the hands of the Europeans as ſlaves. It is aſſerted by ſome (to mention the firſt of them) that theſe ſlaves were originally priſoners of war: that, if they were not purchaſed, they would be killed; and that the Slave-Trade therefore

therefore ought to be continued, inaſmuch as by ſuch a continuation of it there is a continual ſaving of human life.

Not to dwell on the very affectionate concern which all thoſe muſt certainly have for the poor Africans, who viſit their coaſt for this very humane purpoſe, but who go to no other coaſt where they know wars to exiſt, and the natives to be in a ſimilar ſtate of ſociety, let us ſee what may be traced upon this ſubject in the preceding letters. It is ſaid firſt, * that wars, in the common acceptation of the word, rarely happen: Secondly, that, when they do, they ſeldom laſt longer than from ten to fifteen days, and that very few priſoners are ever made; ſo few indeed, that in the great battle which determined the fate of a whole kingdom, twenty-five perſons only were taken.

It is urged by others, as a ſecond argument, that theſe ſlaves were originally criminals; that the receiving of them into ſlavery is only executing the ſentence awarded againſt them by their own laws; and that the continuance of the trade therefore is but the completion of juſtice by the hands of the Europeans.

Let us now go again as before to the preceding letters. In anſwer to this we ſhall find that † out of twelve hundred and forty perſons, whoſe ſituation prior to their coming into the hands of the Europeans is accurately known, two hundred and thirty-five are to be ſet down as having been convicted of crimes either ſuppoſed or real, and one thouſand and five as the produce of treachery and force.

We are enabled to ſtate again from the ſame authority, ‡ that all crimes from the greateſt to the leaſt are alike puniſhed with ſlavery;

* Page 13. † Page 17, 25, 29. ‡ Page 13, 14, 15, 16.

that

that the king is the ultimate judge or arbiter of the fate of ſuch reputed criminals, and that for his benefit they are ſold; that in the caſe where he is not, namely, in the caſe of witchcraft, the effects of a red hot iron on the fleſh are the the teſt of their innocence or guilt; and laſtly, that in ſome caſes it is not the offender only who is puniſhed, but his innocent family, and that this is more or leſs likely to be the caſe in proportion to his poverty or his wealth.

From theſe two ſtatements then it evidently appears, firſt, that the number of reputed criminals is but ſmall; ſecondly, that theſe are diſproportionally puniſhed; thirdly, that of this ſmall number it may happen that ſome of them are perſons totally innocent; and, fourthly, that it does frequently happen that others are, and hence that the continuation of the trade is not the completion of juſtice, but of injuſtice, on the part of the Europeans.

It is inſiſted on by others, as the third argument, that theſe ſlaves were ſlaves in their own country previouſly to their coming into the hands of the Europeans; ſo that thoſe, who buy and tranſport them, occaſion them only to change the place of their abode, and not their condition.

This argument alſo drops to the ground, if we examine the contents of the preceding letters; for it appears, firſt, * that the proportion of free men to ſlaves is about that of fifteen hundred to one.

It appears ſecondly † that the Pillage and Crimes are the two grand means of furniſhing ſupplies for the trade in queſtion.

* Page 44. Letter II. III. IV.

Now,

Now, as the Pillage is made promiſcuouſly upon all, as well upon free men as upon ſlaves, and as the latter may be ſuppoſed not to be more diſpoſed to vice than the former (for the mind cannot be ſo broken, where the ſtate of ſlavery is neither burthenſome nor degrading, as to loſe all its virtue) it follows that the number of pillaged and condemned of the firſt claſs will be to the number of pillaged and condemned of the ſecond, in the proportion in which they are found to exiſt in ſociety to one another: that is to ſay, among every fifteen hundred and one perſons exported, there may be conſidered to be fifteen hundred who were originally free.

This proportion would undoubtedly be the true one, if we could take upon us to ſay, that thoſe, who were born ſlaves, were never ſold by their maſters. And this we are enabled to do nearly on the authority of the preceding letters. For we are informed, that if the proprietor of a ſlave ſhould have a ſon or relation pillaged in the night *, he would undoubtedly give a ſlave for the redemption of ſuch relation or ſon, and that, except in ſuch a caſe, it may be ſet down as an eſtabliſhed rule in theſe countries, that thoſe who are born ſlaves are never ſold. Suppoſe then we were to ſay that, for every fifteen hundred perſons exported, thirty of them were ſuch as were Ranſom-ſlaves (a ſufficient number to allow in a country where very few poſſeſs ſlaves at all) we ſhould ſee the abſurdity of the argument advanced; for we ſhould ſee that almoſt all who are exported were originally free, and that they do change not only the place of their abode, but their condition alſo.

Having now ſtated three arguments generally made uſe of, and all of them deduced from the ſituation of the natives previouſly

* Page 45.

to

to their coming into the hands of the Europeans as ſlaves, I ſhall mention one, which obtains equally, but which is uſually deduced from their ſituation after the above period; for it is contended by the advocates for the trade, that their lives in the colonies are ſo much happier than in the country they left, as to juſtify the continuance of it.

That you may judge of the truth of the argument, I ſhall ſuppoſe, firſt, that all the perſons exported were originally free men. I ſhall ſuppoſe afterwards that they were all of them ſlaves. I ſhall then ſee in either caſe what the preceding letters furniſh us with to enable us to form an idea of the truth of the aſſertion, or whether, whichever of the two caſes we chooſe to take as the true, the argument will not drop to the ground.

On a ſuppoſition then that they were free men, we are juſtified in giving the following account of them.

In Africa * every native in his own village is conſidered as a member of the community, and as a man. He knows no diſtinction of rank or privilege. He ſees but one magiſtrate over him, and this perſon no otherwiſe more powerful than himſelf, than by being able to bring offenders to trial with the conſent of the people. Now, Sir, is this the caſe with him when exported to St. Domingo or your other colonies? Is he not immediately expunged from the rank of men? Is he not conſidered as a mere inſtrument of labour, or put upon a level with the brute?

* Page 13 and 44.

* In Africa every native is the cultivator of his own little farm, and the crop that follows is the reward of his labour. To place him beyond the reach of want, more land awaits him as his own, if more ſhould be judged neceſſary, and this to an extent equal to the ſummit of his wiſhes. But what is his ſituation when exported to St. Domingo? Several of your coloniſts now at Paris aſſure me, that after having expended his ſinews in the fields of his maſter, he has no ſhare in the fruits of his own labour; that he dares not touch the cane which his own hands have planted for fear of the application of the whip; that his meagre looks too often exhibit a proof of his ſcanty fare; and that his little repeated thefts, not on the pageantry of his maſter, but on the neceſſaries of life (thefts of a kind † ſeldom or ever known in his own country) are but too many additional confirmations of his wants.

In his own country again, as a free man, it is evident that he goes to ſleep when it ſuits him. In the morning he riſes at his own hour. In the day he goes where he pleaſes, ſeeking various amuſements when unemployed, or viſiting his friends; and, when he comes to a good old age, he has the pleaſure of finding himſelf an object of favour and reſpect. In your colonies, on the other hand, as the ſame gentlemen aver, his ſlumbers are daily broken by the ſound of the ſhell. If nature tells him that he is not ſufficiently refreſhed, but entices him again to ſleep, he dares not obey her call. Sick or well he muſt riſe to his toil. If he ſhould range about to amuſe himſelf in the day, he is ſeized as a runaway from the rod of deſpotiſm, and oppreſſed with chains. If he viſits his friends he muſt viſit them in the night; and pay for his pleaſure by the pain of encroaching upon his ſleep; and when he comes to a good old age, all eſtimation of him is gone;

* Page 52, 62. † Page 58.

he is conſidered as an uſeleſs animal; as a dead weight on his owner; nay, he is ſometimes even turned adrift, when his aged hands are incapable of procuring him a livelihood, to ſteal or periſh.

* In his own country again, he is ſituated amidſt his relatives and friends. Here the former for generations back are encircled by one fence. Here, if he be grown a man, he beholds on one ſide of him his aged anceſtors, and on the other, views with pleaſure his riſing progeny. But is this his ſituation in St. Domingo? Is he not a ſtranger there? Is not his life rendered continually unhappy by the painful thought of being for ever ſeparated from all whom he eſteemed in life: and if time ſhould chance to eraſe the remembrance of theſe, or render it faint, dare he even then frequently form any new connexion, or can he dwell with pleaſure on the proſpect of a progeny to come. Your coloniſts tell me No. They have often heard him ſay, " Theſe whites are the moſt mercileſs of men. They are not content with our bodies in this life, but they follow us after death. They perſecute our images by entailing upon our children their parental lot. I will not taſte the connubial ſtate. I will not bring an infant into the world to become a brute. If I do, I will ſtifle it, and be theirs the crime."

Now, Sir, if to the above conſiderations you ſhould add a remarkable circumſtance to be found in the preceding letters, namely†, that his attachment to his native village is of ſo extraordinary a kind, that though you chaſe him from it with all the dogs of perſecution he will return to it again, or, in other words, that whatever ſituation you put him into in the colonies, you make him miſerable by taking him from his native ſpot, you will form a deciſive idea of the relative happineſs

* Page 49. † Page 55.

of

of his ſituation as a free man on the continent of Africa, and as a ſlave in St. Domingo.

Having now conſidered him as having been free before the time of his exportation, I ſhall follow the plan I intended, and conſider him to have been a ſlave in his own country. On ſuch a ſuppoſition the following compariſon may be made.

* In Africa, though a ſlave, he is not ſubjected to ſtripes or any other perſonal ill treatment. Whips, chains, and other inſtruments of torture, are there unknown. But the gentlemen inform me from your colonies, that, after he has been exported, you trace on his back ſuch marks of the whip as time can never deface; that chains and impriſonment, with various inſtruments of torment await him, if he ſhould have the virtue to tranſgreſs the colonial laws; and that, even if he ſhould not tranſgreſs them, he is never ſafe from the ſallies of paſſion and caprice.

† In his own country again, his work is eaſy and light, not exceeding the ordinary exerciſe which health requires. In your colonies, when exported there, I am told from the ſame authority as before, that it is hard and intolerable. In his own country he enjoys often whole days of leiſure. In your colonies, days and years paſs alike without a reſpite from his labours, and days and years are ſtill to paſs till nature is exhauſted. In the former, he is cheered by the example of his maſter, who undertakes an equal portion of labour with him in the ſame field. In the latter, he is rouzed to exertion by the laſh. Vain and idle is the plea that diſeaſe has aſſailed and

* Page 46.

† Page 45, 46.

and

enfeebled him, and that he is weak. To ſuggeſt this he frequently dares not, and not to ſuggeſt it is to fall the victim of avarice and oppreſſion.

* In his own country again, he is led to conſider that ſlavery is leſs a diſtinction in reality than in the name. He eats with the children of his maſter, and partakes of the ſame repaſt. He ſleeps often in the ſame room, and always in an apartment as commodious as theirs. When in company with his maſter, it is difficult often to know which of them is the ſlave. But I am informed that very unlike to this is his ſituation at St. Domingo: that he is conſidered as of a different order of creation: that the whip only is baſe enough to touch his body; and that, if ever admitted into the preſence of his owner, there is the immenſe diſtance between them of a reptile and of a God.

This, Sir, is the ſecond comparative view which I undertook to make, namely, between the ſituation of a ſlave in Africa and a ſlave in your colonies. Now, if to this you add that which was made before, namely, that of a free man and a ſlave in the ſame two countries, you will be able to reject the argument with diſdain, ſhould it ever be oppoſed to you, that the lives of thoſe annually exported to the colonies are ſo much happier there than in their own country, as to juſtify the continuance of the Slave-Trade.

Having now replied very fully to the fourth argument ſuggeſted to your notice, I ſhall offer to your conſideration a fifth, which has had ſome influence, but which may be alſo anſwered from the contents of the preceding letters.

* Page 46.

It has been conſtantly handed about, and this with ſome ſhare of ſucceſs, that the natives of Africa have not the ſame faculties as other men; by which it is inſinuated, that they were born, or at leaſt are fit only for ſlaves.

* As a proof of the contrary of this, we find them in their own country under a regular form of government, with diviſions and ſubdiviſions of officers, ſo that a large tract is put into a ſituation to be governed with eaſe, and edicts, that are to travel to a conſiderable extent, to be ſoon promulgated and obeyed.

† We ſee alſo a certain ſyſtem of juriſprudence inſtituted. We ſee property divided into two kinds; laws not only relating to this but to other ſubjects; offenders tried for tranſgreſſing them, and this by their own Peers and upon the ſpot. We ſee alſo a ſyſtem of revenue, impoſed with judgment, collected without difficulty, and equal to the exigencies of the ſtate. To which we may add the name and form of a religion known and acknowledged by them all.

If it ſhould be objected to their ſyſtem of juriſprudence as a weak one ‡, that in the particular caſe of witchcraft the effects of a hot iron on the fleſh are the teſt of innocence or guilt, let us remember how ſhort a time it is, ſince our own anceſtors had recourſe to the boiling water and burning plough-ſhare for the ſame purpoſe; and that at this period they never demeaned their own underſtandings ſo much, nor do we their deſcendants think ſo contemptibly of them, as to ſuppoſe that others had a right to enſlave them on that account.

* Page 40, 41. † Page 13, 43, 46, 54. ‡ Page 16.

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If it ſhould be objected again to their ſyſtem of government, * that the governours have too much power over the governed, and † that men of condition and wealth can eſcape the penalties of the laws, let us ſee whether we Europeans are perfect in theſe particulars. It is but lately ſince we have ſeen a Baſtile, and we know of an Inquiſition exiſting at preſent in two kingdoms: and as to the other charge, if we look at home, we ſhall ſee how almoſt impoſſible it is for the poor man to obtain redreſs from the injuries of the rich, or, in other words, that the rich ſhould ſuffer the puniſhment which the law preſcribes in caſes of injury to the poor. In ſhort, we have no reaſon to boaſt. The ſyſtem of juriſprudence, belonging to the moſt enlightened of us, is extremely defective and weak. In civil actions ſo little is the law underſtood, that the iſſue is never certain, and in criminal ones not only are the puniſhments ridiculouſly diſproportionate to the offences, but inadequate to the wiſhed for end.

Though the above obſervations on the ſyſtems of government, juriſprudence, revenue, and religion, to be found among the natives of Africa, are more than ſufficient to eſtabliſh their capacities as men, yet I cannot help adding, that we have ſeen them to great advantage in other points of view ‡. We have ſeen them as farmers and huſbandmen. We have ſeen them as builders of boats. We have beheld them again as manufacturers in gold, iron, copper, wood, cotton, and this in a manner that would do no diſcredit to Europeans.

A ſixth and laſt argument, which meets with its anſwer from the ſame ſource, is the following: " That you ought not to aboliſh the trade in ſlaves, unleſs you can ſubſtitute another trade in ſome

* Page 13, 15, 40. † Page 44. ‡ Page 57, 58, 59, 60, &c.

other

other branch on the coaſt of Africa, and to do the latter is impoſſible on account of the indolence of the natives, and their unwillingneſs to engage in active life."

Let us now conſult the preceding pages upon this point. We find in the firſt place * a conſiderable ſpirit of commerce among the natives. In proportion as new markets have ariſen, new trades have evidently ſprung up, and new induſtry has been exerted. They hold a continual intercourſe with each other for the purpoſes of trade, and to ſuch a degree has this ſpirit of commerce riſen, that to procure a market for their commodities they will travel leagues with immenſe burthens on their heads, and be regardleſs of the weight.

Nor can we, in the ſecond place, avoid noticing with leſs ſatisfaction the conſtant occupations of ſome, and the intenſe labours of others, in the ſeveral departments which they profeſs. Some † of the natives do not employ themſelves for a ſeaſon only, but follow ſome occupation or other for the year round. The labour of others again is equal to that which any Europeans undergo. ‡ As a proof of this, we may adduce the employment of the boat-builders, from the time of cutting down the tree in the foreſt to the time of delivering in the ſhape of a boat upon the ſhore, at the diſtance of thirty leagues overland as before deſcribed: an inſtance of perſeverance, which cannot fail of being urged ſucceſsfully againſt thoſe, who ſhould call their induſtry into queſtion.

As a third circumſtance of material importance in the caſe of the argument adduced, we may notice, from || the price of the boats

* Page 65, 66. † Page 59, 61. ‡ Page 60. || Page 60.

above-

above mentioned, compared with the toil deſcribed to have been expended upon them, the great cheapneſs of labour in thoſe parts.

In ſhort, Sir, if we reflect properly on the ſpirit of commerce to be found among the natives of Africa, and if to this we ſubjoin the conſideration, firſt, of the variety and fatigue of their ſeveral occupations; and ſecondly, of the low demand for the articles made in following the ſame, the argument not only falls, but it appears on the other hand, that there are few people, from whom more is to be expected by the European merchant than from the natives in queſtion, in the introduction of a new commerce in the place of the execrable trade in men.

I have now, Sir, communicated to you all the arguments in defence of the continuance of the Slave-Trade, to which any anſwer may be drawn from the contents of the preceding letters. I have therefore finiſhed my taſk, and ſhall now conclude, obſerving only in addition to what I have ſaid before, that if the conduct of the Europeans and Africans were to be compared, I fear the former would have all the reaſon to bluſh. The * Europeans are repreſented as flocking themſelves, or as ſending their agents, to the courts of the African kings; as ſeducing theſe by intoxication and bribery to ſubvert the juſt principles of government, and to become wolves inſtead of ſhepherds to their people; as ſuggeſting ſchemes of treachery and violence, and as being receivers of the prey. The Africans, on the other hand, though they have ſome bad laws and cuſtoms among them, may attribute them in a great meaſure to the Europeans. Notwithſtanding the ignorance and barbarity with which we often charge them,

* Page 9, 10, 32.

they

they are not devoid of virtues. * To the European maſter the African exhibits a noble leſſon in the mild and gentle treatment of his ſlave. † To the ſovereigns of Europe the wiſe and virtuous Almammy ſets a no leſs illuſtrious example in extirpating the commerce in the human race; and when we conſider this amiable man as having been trained up in a land of ſlavery, and as having had in the introduction of ſuch a revolution all the prejudices of education and cuſtom to oppoſe; when we conſider him again as ſacrificing a part of his own revenue; as refuſing the preſents of the Europeans; and as expoſing himſelf in conſequence of it to the vindictive ravages of the agents of the latter, he is certainly more to be reſpected than any of the ſovereigns of Europe, inaſmuch as he has made a much nobler ſacrifice than they, and has done more for the cauſes of humanity, juſtice, liberty, and religion.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient ſervant,

T. CLARKSON.

* Page 45, 46. † Page 31.

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